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ANTI-RACIST

*Working Across
Differences*

EDUCATION



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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

This issue of *Orbit* provides broad-ranging coverage of another central issue for Ontario educators: how to develop curricula, how to teach, and how to manage our schools and classrooms in ways that are just, equitable, and relevant in our multi-ethnic society. To discuss the issue, Guest Editor George Dei, an academic and activist in our Department of Sociology in Education, has brought together a distinguished and impressive panel of contributors. They include OISE professors, students, and researchers, members of the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto, Ministry of Education and Training officials, school board administrators, program consultants, and classroom teachers.

The authors explore the various implications for teachers, students, and communities of implementing anti-racist programs. Many go beyond familiar observations and standard dialogues to explore what they conclude are the systemic, structural bases of racism in our schools and society; some offer analyses and recommendations that are unconventional and profoundly challenging. All the authors offer insight both into the complex nature of the problem and what needs to be done as we approach solutions.

The topic is obviously important and we hope that the articles in this issue stimulate further discussion among professional educators and the general public.

Arthur Kruger

Anti-Racist Education

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Anti-Racist Education

Working Across Differences

INTRODUCTION

George Dei

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Rain does not fall on one roof
and neither does the sun shine
on one house alone.

— African proverb

Many Canadians today are questioning educational practices that do not adequately speak to the variety of human experiences or to the diverse history of events and ideas that have shaped human growth and development. To some, anti-racism education is one way to address the problems associated with the school as a site for reproducing societal inequalities. There is a need to question what anti-racism education is and how it can be incorporated in the various phases of the school system. For example, how can anti-racist education help in identifying the areas of systemic racism and power inequities within the schools? How can anti-racist education assist in developing the student's sense of connection to, and identification with, the school? How can anti-racist education help us respond to the broader questions of educational equity?

"Anti-racist education" is a terminology that is very much in vogue today. For all of us who use the term, there are additional challenges we have to face: Can we develop and sustain a political and academic commitment to uphold the teachings of anti-racism in the various institutional settings in which we work and live? Are we prepared to make an unshakeable commitment to work for social change and societal transformation as required?

In pursuing the goals and ideals of anti-racist education, teachers and students must be prepared to cross boundaries into

different territories and create spaces for engaging one another in dialogue. Within our schools, we must engage in conversations in human relational terms. We must critically question ourselves and our societies. We must engage each other well beyond the dictates and confines of "concerns of the moment."

Anti-racist education is more than a discourse. In practical terms, it is an action-oriented educational strategy for addressing issues of racism and other types of social oppression. It is a call to make the theoretical discourse of "empowerment" real, a call for a fundamental restructuring of power relations in the schools and in the wider society. It is also about educators acknowledging their relative power and privileged positions in the schools and a preparedness to question this power and privilege.

Anti-racism theory cannot be separated from anti-racism practice. To be an anti-racist educator is to be a theorist and a practitioner. This means grounding our theoretical discussions about oppression in the harsh realities of the lived experiences of the students in our classrooms.

Basic Principles of Anti-Racist Education

Following from the pioneering works of Canadian educators and social activists Barb Thomas (1984) and Enid Lee (1985), I wish to put forward nine basic principles of anti-racist education which I believe need emphasis. Anti-racist education:

1. recognizes the social effects of "race" although race lacks a scientific basis. The concept is central to anti-racist discourse.
2. teaches that one cannot understand the full social effects of race without a comprehension of the ways in which all

other forms of social oppression intersect (race, class, gender, and sexuality).

3. questions white (male) power and privilege and the rationality for dominance in society.
4. addresses the marginalization of certain voices in society and the delegitimation of the knowledge and experience of subordinate groups in the educational system.
5. recognizes that students do not go to school as "disembodied" individuals, but that their background and their identities are implicated in the schooling and learning processes.
6. acknowledges the pedagogic need to confront the challenge of diversity and difference in Canadian society and the urgency for an educational system that is more inclusive and is capable of responding to minority and Aboriginal concerns about public schooling.
7. acknowledges the role of the educational system in producing and reproducing not only racial but also gender, sex, and class-based inequalities in society. Of concern here are the institutionalized structures within which the delivery of education takes place in our schools.
8. stresses that we cannot discuss the school problems of our youth in isolation from the material and ideological circumstances in which the students find themselves.
9. questions pathological explanations of the "family" or "home environment" as a source of school problems. Such explanations tend to divert attention away from the institutional structures of schooling which treat children and youth unequally and which justify the

status quo by attributing causal priority to the victims themselves.

Let me expand on some of these principles beginning with the centrality of race in the anti-racism discourse. While race is a contested notion, we cannot deny the reality of the racialized societies in which we live. The denial of racism will not make the problem go away. Historically, it has been used as convenient tool for the distribution of rewards and penalties in society. Today, the concept continues to have much currency. An understanding of the impact and consequences of racism on individuals, groups, and society is crucial to the anti-racism project for transformative

about anti-racism is to teach about how our race or our social position might implicate us in ways of knowing and tie us to particular interests in the institutions in which we work and study.

A very seductive and dangerous undertaking for every educator is to view the student from the perspective of the deficit model/paradigm — “You have less therefore you need this” or “I have it and therefore you learn from me.” This approach can be very disempowering for students and derail any transformative potential in an integrative anti-racism project. I believe what is needed is a genuinely inclusionary approach which emphasizes that although we come from different backgrounds and have different histories, and have relative privileges, we could still learn from each other in the struggle for social change. We could learn from the trials of the past and build on the strengths and guard against the pitfalls of our predecessors. As educators and as students, we could validate one another’s experiences and critically question our differences. We could all acknowledge our collective and individualized existences, and seek to connect who we are as individuals with a larger project of social transformation.

But genuine inclusion should be more than grafting onto the existing order. It should be, in the words of the African-American scholar bell hooks (1988), moving those on the margins to the centre. This is important because current definitions and practices of inclusion have not gone far enough. The anti-racist educator must assist students to re-define power structures in society. Paraphrasing Daigre (1984), the goal of anti-racist education is to bring all minority students to the stage of the classroom drama, not merely as players supporting an all-White European cast but as major actors.

As an educator researching in the Canadian public school system, I am greatly perturbed by the marginality and depersonalization experienced particularly by so-called students of colour. There is a culture of dominance and the voicelessness and silencing of these students is disheartening. How do our schools engage some students while disengaging others? Many are caught in a struggle to escape social labels and categories which oversimplify the complexities of their

As an educator researching in the Canadian public school system, I am greatly perturbed by the marginality and depersonalization experienced particularly by so-called students of colour.

George Dei



learning and social change.

As educators we should be able to confront and deal more openly with the tensions and uneasiness, the contradictions and paradoxes of discussing race and racism in our classrooms. We should be able to speak more openly about the fit and the inconsistencies between institutional values and attitudes and institutional behaviours.

But it is also important to remember that race and racial identity are not the only factors which divide our schools and communities. We need to examine social difference in terms of other factors as well — class, gender, sexuality, language, religion, and place of origin — and the power dynamics that are constituted around such notions. Thus to teach

lives. They are engaged in a struggle to identify with school teaching materials. They are in a constant search for actual bodies with whom to share experiences. Their eyes wander in search of appropriate role models. The anti-racist educator must help classroom teachers engage students' social knowledge in the classroom in a way that will allow for all class participants to be emotionally hooked into the learning process.

The notion of difference is equally central to the anti-racist discourse. The issue really is how we relate to human and social differences in the classroom. It is simply not enough for teachers to teach, and for students to learn, about other cultures. The anti-racist educator must teach both teachers and students how the dominant culture systematically skews our understanding and acknowledgement of minority and Aboriginal groups. We need to help our students build what Joanne Pagano (1994) calls "communities of differences" and we can only undertake this task if we first learn how to deal with our differences and the inherent conflicting interests and power imbalances in our society.

The challenge, as I see it, is to ensure that a politics of difference does not paralyse or compromise a larger transformative project for social change. There is the power of collective action, and we must beware of taking up an "anti-essentialist" language and approach which prevents forging alliances with people and groups who share a common vision of social transformation.

As anti-racist educators we also have to avoid the oversimplified notion of identity that dwells on the "individual self." The self is beyond the individual and we need to understand how issues of individual and group cultural identities intersect in the schooling process. We have to link identity with schooling in order to give meaning, place, context, origin, history to discussions of who we are as educators and students.

To engage in effective anti-racist work is also to know how to deal with resistance and everyday opposition. Critical educators should also be able to identify the moment and the allies for anti-racist work. We must be able to locate the sources of disempowerment and disengagement for our students and avoid the convenience of the "blame the

As educators we should be able to confront and deal more openly with the tensions and uneasiness, the contradictions and paradoxes of discussing race and racism in our classrooms.

victim" approach to understanding societal problems. Dealing with resistance and opposition to anti-racism is to engage in a political project to demystify the false separation between the defenders of academic excellence and quality education on the one hand and the promoters of diversity and educational equity on the other. The issues of diversity, excellence, quality, and equity in education are inseparable.

As educators we need to ask ourselves some tough questions as we attempt to promote anti-racism in our schools: How do we prepare our students to deal with the contradictions and paradoxes in the school's promise of equality and the realities of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression and inequality in society? How do we link the issues of racism with structural and global poverty bearing in mind Barry Troyna's (1993, p. 11) contention that we as a society cannot deal with the problem of racism without attacking the structural problems of poverty and economic deprivation. Anti-racist classroom teaching must stress the relevance of what is taught and learned to the material conditions of everyday existence in society.

As anti-racist educators we should be prepared to engage in issues-oriented teaching, to teach about resistance, to recognize social oppression, and to act conscientiously to address and remove injustices in society.

This issue of *Orbit* is divided into four sections reflecting on varied and diverse perspectives on anti-racist education — Policy, Conceptual Models, Classroom Practice, and Ethnolinguistic Minority Youths and Schooling. Some

articles do indeed overlap these categories. Recognizing that there is no singular voice on anti-racism, we have included articles from students, teachers, educational researchers, administrators, and field practitioners with varied definitions of anti-racist education. A number of pertinent and thought-provoking issues have been raised. Hopefully, educators in Ontario and throughout Canada will respond to these issues in their classroom practices.

I will not take up more space to highlight the contents of each piece, particularly when we had to ask writers to condense their thoughts and ideas so that a wide range of perspectives on the topic could be included in this issue. Every article addresses an important aspect of anti-racist practice as well as the implications for students, staff, and teachers within the school system. The dialogue should lead to concrete action in the schools to address the very issues raised by the authors.

Recently Enid Lee, guest lecturing in one of my classes at OISE, told class participants that as anti-racist educators we must have the courage to say "what we are for and what we are against." An educational project dealing with issues of racism and social oppression is fraught with many challenges and hurdles, particularly in the face of mounting opposition and resistance to social transformation. But as many of the articles in this *Orbit* issue show, we are all implicated in the anti-racism debate in one way or another. No one can conveniently remain on the sidelines any longer.

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Anti-Racist
Education:
Policy and
Practice in
Ontario
Schools

The Policy and Practice of Anti-Racist Education

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training

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which have been suggested to move towards full implementation of anti-racist education are directed at areas which include curriculum content, learning environments, communications, community resources, employment practices, clear policies on both systemic practices and individual behaviours, interventions, professional relationships and full partnership for parents and communities in decision-making.

Policies of the Ontario Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has taken action in support of these practices. In February 2, 1990, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 111 required school boards "to develop and put in place employment equity policies with respect to the employment and promotion of women." Each board is expected to:

develop and implement an employment equity program that includes strategies to increase the representation of women in supervisory officer, principal, and vice-principal positions by 50 percent or more by the year 2000. The goal of 30 percent set out in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 92, December 16, 1986 remain[s] in effect for all other occupational categories. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1990)

These programs to promote employment equity complement Bill 79 which will promote employment equity in the workplace not only for women but also for Aboriginal people, racial/ethnocultural minorities, and persons with disabilities.

The Ministry has also introduced legislation to promote access and equity in educational institutions. In 1992, Bill 21 was proclaimed (Ontario Parliament, 1992).

The goal of the work is the creation and maintenance of an educational experience for all students which is fair, honest, encouraging, respectful, and honouring of all people.

Anti-racist education is a set of educators' attitudes, assumptions, expectations, interactions, and behaviours which work together with appropriate learning materials and environments to produce equitable outcomes for students of all ethnocultural communities, of various races. Anti-racist education is not simply the addition or substitution of specific curricular materials, the occasional acknowledgment of the histories, beliefs, and cultures of a broad range of people, or the expectation that individuals will not be abusive to each other on the basis of racial identity. The goal of the work is the creation and maintenance of an educational experience for all students which is fair, honest, encouraging, respectful, and honouring of all people. It assumes that all students, whatever their racial or ethnocultural identity, are seen at the centre of the curriculum, deserve to have their voices heard at the centre, and are given the tools to challenge inequities of all kinds.

The challenge is to develop strategies which will work. The principles of anti-racism are generally regarded as admirable. The practice is not so simple. It requires a profound re-thinking of traditional practices and structures. Strategies

The relevant sections read as follows:

29. require boards to develop and implement a policy on employment equity for women and other groups designated by the Minister, to submit the policy to the Minister for approval and to implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister;
- 29.1 require boards to develop and implement an ethnocultural equity and anti-racism policy, to submit the policy to the Minister for approval and to implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister; ...

This was followed in July, 1992 by the advertisement for the position of Assistant Deputy Minister, Anti-Racism, Access and Equity. Some of the recommendations of the Stephen Lewis Report also contributed to the provincial government's initiatives designed to combat racism and ensure equitable access and outcomes throughout the educational system.

The July 13, 1993 Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 stated:

In accordance with an amendment made in 1992 to the Education Act, every school board shall develop a policy on anti-racism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy. (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993)

A key component of the development of these policies is the involvement of the community in a meaningful way. The policies must include clear statements that racism will not be tolerated. It is essential that all staff and all students be made aware of these policies. Effective anti-racism demands a publicly stated and lived commitment which includes identifying racism where it exists and challenging it. The open, public commitment of teachers and administrators to anti-racism is crucial. To assist school boards to develop their policies and submit them to the Ministry of Education and Training by March 31, 1995, ministry staff arranged regional symposia during May and June, 1994. These symposia provided the opportunity for discussion and clarification of the issues.

The Ministry is also moving to increase diversity in the teaching profession. It is assisting faculties of education and school boards to train and hire quali-

fied teachers who in their diversity will be representative of the school population and give expression to the aspirations of Aboriginal people, women, persons with disabilities, and all citizens irrespective of their race, colour, creed, age, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Of the eight initiatives, four address the issues of recruitment, admissions, and programming in the faculties of education. Two of the initiatives are aimed at promoting the certification and employment of qualified teachers trained outside of Canada. Two initiatives promote the hiring of racial and ethnocultural minority teachers. The province has provided \$1.4 million over two years to fund these initiatives.

Racism, Anti-Racism, and Multiculturalism

The title of the Division of Anti-Racism, Access and Equity is sometimes seen as being too negative. To us it is uncompromisingly positive. It acknowledges that racism exists in our society, that it is the intention of the Ministry of Education and Training to strive to eliminate racism, discrimination, and inequities in our educational institutions and to promote access and equity in policies, programs, and services for all its citizens. This may indeed be a difficult task, but it sets a clear vision of equity for all who serve the students of Ontario.

Racism is profoundly offensive to the basic decency of Canadians. It is the progenitor of apartheid, ethnic cleansing, slavery, the Holocaust, and every imaginable assault on the human spirit based on the assumption that one race or ethnocultural group is, by divine right, by history, tradition, or practice superior and consequently is privileged to exercise power over others and deal with them as they desire. Racism impacts on society as a whole. Therefore anti-racist and ethnocultural equity education is relevant to all Ontario schools.

The Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 1992) defines racism as:

a system in which one group of people exercises abusive power over others on the basis of skin colour and racial heritage; a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one racial or ethnocultural group over

another. Racism is manifested within organizational and institutional structures and programs as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns.

Anti-racism is defined as:

a process which acknowledges the existence of systemic racism and through policies and practices seeks actively to identify, challenge and reduce racism in all its various forms wherever they exist.

Despite periodic objections to Canada's and Ontario's multiculturalism policies, Canadians have become increasingly comfortable with the notion of cultural diversity if for no other reason that this diversity exists even among apparently homogeneous segments of society. We have become increasingly comfortable with sharing the culture when interpreted as song, and dance, and food. Sharing the diversities which could enrich our classrooms and our lives does not come as easily. Sharing the power in our decision-making processes is the most difficult of all. It means acknowledging and accepting the differences as well as the similarities among us and ensuring that our diversities are reflected and included in our schools and in our daily lives.

Like any other set of circumstances requiring fundamental change, anti-racism is a process beset with ups and downs, advances and retreats, victories and defeats. We must hold a clear vision, remembering as Rosalie Abella reminds us:

Sometimes equality means treating people the same despite their differences and sometimes it means treating them as equals by accommodating their differences. (Abella, 1984, p. 7)

Practising Anti-Racism

Curriculum and teacher support are key factors in the development of an anti-racist, equitable learning environment. Social psychologist Claude Steele, in an article published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in April 1992, points out that the underachievement of racial minority youth stems not from limitations in their innate abilities to achieve and to succeed in school but to systemic racial discrimination which erodes their self-esteem and makes them feel alienated from achievement in school as a means of protecting their self-worth. This alienation allows

them to appear unperturbed by their academic failure, insulates them from the failure of academic life, confers an illusion of invulnerability, but leads inevitably to more failure, to more alienation.

To break this vicious cycle, Steele suggests that "the student must feel valued by the teacher for his or her potential and as a person.... No tactic of instruction, no matter how ingenious, can succeed without it." The teacher's role is "affirming this potential, crediting them with their achievements, inspiring them."

The curriculum must be inclusive and anti-racist. The particulars of the students' lives and cultures must be reflected in the curriculum. For racial/ethnocultural minority students, this means validating their experiences. If that which is central to their experience is relegated to special days or weeks or even months, or to special courses, it is assumed that the material is not of general relevance.

At the Ministry, we believe that all ethnocultural communities of various races, must be partners in anti-racist work. They are the experts on their own experience — including the experience of discrimination.

They are a rich source of information and valuable as role models for students. In many ways, the students are the experts. A most effective strategy of introducing anti-racism into the school environment is through the students themselves. A "committee" and "coalition" or an "action group" of committed and energetic students will bring a lively awareness through inviting speakers, instituting welcome committees and buddy systems for newly arrived students, organizing anti-racism assemblies, acting as advocates for one another around curriculum and school organization, and generally keeping everyone aware.

There are details and specifics around many of these strategies that must be made appropriate to the needs of the schools, and many, many tried and untried approaches. The lived experience of racism must be heard, and the conviction that things must change will lead us all to develop more and better strategies for confronting it.

If anti-racist education is to be more than a shell game, a passing aberration, the collective will must be dedicated to

the achievement of a non-racist society. Canadians are fundamentally a decent, honest people. They are respected the world over for their caring for the human spirit. And it is this caring which, in Ontario, translates into legislation, policy, and strategies to ensure equitable access and outcomes for all the students in its educational institutions.

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Evaluating School Policies for Anti-Racist Education

Six Considerations for Educators

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Legislation passed in 1992 now requires all school boards in Ontario to implement policies of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993). It is not clear, however, how these policies will be

evaluated. At a minimum, people will want to know if the policies put into place are doing what they intend to do. If so, how is this happening? How well? How might the new policies be improved? What information needs to be gathered and analysed in order to know these things? These are not simple questions but they are vital if the new policies are to be effective and if educators are to know how to continue improving their practices in this direction.

Advice on these questions is difficult to formulate generally, given that each school board in Ontario is developing a

unique policy to address its own local circumstances. Moreover, examples of relevant, systematic evaluation studies are only now beginning to emerge around the world, for example, in Britain (Tomlinson, 1990; Vyas, 1992), the U.S. (Borman, Timm, El-Amin, & Winston, 1992; Gay, 1992; Price, 1992), and Canada (Fisher & Echols, 1989; Melenchuk, 1989). Most of these studies, however, have focussed broadly on multicultural education rather than specifically on anti-racist or equity education and have addressed social contexts that differ substantively from those in Ontario (see Cummins, 1988; Lewis, 1992).

In this article, we will outline six considerations worth attending to closely in evaluating school policies and programs for anti-racist education. Our suggestions are based on experiences we have had over the past three years evaluating a nation-wide pilot program aimed at fostering multicultural and anti-racist leadership through week-long exchanges among high school students and their teachers (for summary details see Cumming & Mackay, 1993; Cumming, Mackay, &

Sakyi, 1994). This program was organized by the Society of Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) from 1991 to 1993, involving groups of about 25 students and several of their teachers from schools in British Columbia (Victoria, Squamish), Manitoba (Winnipeg and surrounding areas), Ontario (Bracebridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, Ottawa, Scarborough), Nova Scotia (Halifax, Sydney), and the Northwest Territories (Igloolik).

1. Refine Goals Locally

If policies for anti-racist education are formulated in general terms at the board level, then they probably need to be reformulated and reinterpreted locally by teachers and school administrators. Teachers and school administrators need to make personal sense of general policies in order to determine actions relevant to their individual knowledge and priorities as well as their classrooms, schools, and communities. In the first year of our evaluation study, we found that teachers had visibly different notions of SEVEC's generally stated objectives for anti-racist education, and teachers were acting on them differently in their classrooms — both across Canada and within particular schools. Teachers tended to emphasize certain objectives for anti-racist education in different ways and to ignore or not fully understand others.

So in the second year of SEVEC's pilot project, we asked teachers to restate and reach consensual agreement on these objectives in their own terms, based on their first year's experiences and what they felt most capable of achieving. The result was a firmer agreement on the nature and status of the objectives (and definitions of key concepts such as *race*, *prejudice*, and *culture*), greater personal "ownership" and commitment to the policies, and a refined, more specific and relevant sense of what could realistically be achieved (and evaluated).

2. Work Closely With Teachers, Students, Families, and Community Groups

Anti-racist education addresses a very complex and unique set of factors and processes in schools and societies. To understand these complexities, we found an initial phase of participant-observation in schools was necessary for our

evaluation study to see what was actually happening. We needed to sit in classes, participate in school activities, and talk extensively with teachers, students, their families, and key people in local communities.

Without such a careful and time-consuming process of preliminary data collection, we would have had very little awareness of how to evaluate what people were really doing, wanted to do, or thought important or possible. On the basis of this first-hand information and awareness, we were able to design formal instruments for evaluation that

To understand what anti-racist education is really doing (or not doing), information needs to be collected and analysed on students' processes of learning and achievement, as with other aspects of school curricula.

seemed appropriate to the educational situations, a step that would have been impossible had we simply designed instruments in advance or borrowed them from previous studies.

3. Expect Situational Differences

One of the most striking impressions we gained from watching teachers and students address issues of anti-racism was the difference in perceptions and expectations that people have from place to place. These differences form a fundamental consideration that evaluation of school anti-racist policies needs to anticipate and look for. Topical issues and normative expectations in one school and community differ markedly from those in other settings, particularly in regard to ethnic composition and history of local peoples. For example, recent immigration may be in the foreground of controversy in schools in Ottawa, just a normal aspect of life in Scarborough, and a somewhat

distant issue in Bracebridge. In contrast, systemic racism towards First Nations peoples may be more prevalent in rural than urban settings. One jarring example of these differences appeared when students and teachers from Halifax met with those from Scarborough, two cities where the status and history of black populations are very different. Teaching activities and materials generated from the Toronto area assumed that black populations were first-generation immigrants making cultural adjustments to Canada, whereas those from Halifax assumed blacks were long-term, established residents. The exchange program prompted productive challenges to stereotypes in either location, but only after participants' initial pedagogical assumptions were confronted and dismissed.

4. Document and Analyse What and How Students Are Learning

To understand what anti-racist education is really doing (or not doing), information needs to be collected and analysed on students' processes of learning and achievement, as with other aspects of school curricula. Unfortunately, there are no ready-made ways for doing this nor even very many useful instances of this having been done. Standard indicators may not be possible given the situational differences outlined above.

One strategy we adopted was an open-ended learning log in which students recorded, at weekly intervals, the things they felt they were learning (see Cumming, Mackay, & Sakyi, 1994). We then developed a scheme for coding the content of these logs categorically, allowing us to determine the substance and type of learning students reported engaging in. In early stages of the pilot program, most learning processes turned out to involve factual information and developing personal leadership skills. But as teachers received evaluation information on this tendency, they started to emphasize more distinctly conceptual learning and students' capacities to organize actions related to anti-racism. As one teacher pointed out, distinctions need to be made between the various ways in which students can learn about anti-racist education — whether developing new awareness, accumulating substantive knowledge, or taking social action.

A second strategy we adopted was to

prepare a simple questionnaire with (Likert-type) items based on the program's stated objectives. We administered these to students before they started the program and after they completed it, finding students stated they increased their capacities in certain areas (e.g., using language related to race and culture, awareness of their own biases and prejudices) but not in other areas (e.g., increasing equity in their schools, dealing with prejudice and discrimination). Future evaluation studies might anticipate that: (a) programs of anti-racist education may be able to achieve certain objectives and not others; (b) students may take a long time to achieve some objectives, particularly if these are contingent upon school and community contexts rather than personal skills or knowledge; and (c) students may experience these achievements differently at different ages (e.g., 14-, 15-, and 16-year olds reported greater changes than older or younger students did).

5. Use Exemplary Cases to Inform Others

The testimony of teachers and students about anti-racist education proved especially useful for orienting people, informing people what had been done in particular schools and student groups, and suggesting formative developments to school activities and policies. For instance, panels of students and teachers speaking publicly about their experiences and school initiatives helped to describe particular achievements in anti-racist education vividly while inspiring others to take similar steps. Other public displays demonstrated informal kinds of evaluation, such as student drama productions, murals in school halls, and work in student committees or clubs. For our evaluation reports, descriptive documentation of classroom activities was the most suitable vehicle for conveying the results of the participant-observation phase of our study, particularly to report on the kinds of dilemmas that people encountered when trying to teach anti-racism (Mackay & Cumming, 1991).

6. Look For Long-Term, Widespread Impact

A particularly challenging but crucial aspect to evaluating anti-racist policies is

discerning how long-term changes might take place within schools and in respect to the broader communities that schools serve. The impact of anti-racist policies may, for example, take many years to materialize, perhaps appearing only well after students graduate from school. They may affect people far removed from school contexts. Or they may change over time as new personnel and student populations (or even new school policies) appear. Consequently, longitudinal, broad-based evaluation strategies are needed to do justice to this type of educational innovation, involving systematic research over a period of years within schools and relevant community contexts. Otherwise, evaluation may not be able to tell us precisely if and how school policies in anti-racist education really make a difference. Finding out what might happen within one school or one year is vital, but the most important effects of anti-racist policies may only be apparent over the very long term and in diffuse ways.

A comparative perspective is also needed: to find out what may be integral to making anti-racist work across schools or be unique to specific schools and communities. The SEVEC program — involving a variety of schools across Canada — was able to achieve some (albeit limited) comparative perspective; we discovered, for example, not only commonality in the topics and activities related to anti-racist education that teachers decided to teach and students said they learned but also notable differences between schools in issues related to racism and specific ethnic populations.

To consider the impact of the SEVEC program, we sent a mail survey to students' families and to teachers who were not directly involved in the program, asking them to document concrete things they perceived the school anti-racist program had brought about. The parents and teachers who responded could point out many specific examples, such as increasing students' knowledge of other cultures, formation of student committees or clubs, or improving communication between schools and community groups. But such information provided only a glimpse of the long-term impact of anti-racist education on life in schools and communities. We had not planned a longitudinal research strategy, just as, probably, few people are now making such systematic plans in Ontario school boards. As a

result, evaluation — as conducted with these limitations — may never be able to tell us fully what anti-racist education policies are (or are not) able to achieve, even where such activities are now successfully under way.

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Anti-Bias Practices for ESL Teachers

A Response to a Province-Wide Survey

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Recently I was part of a team of researchers who carried out a province-wide survey of provisions and demands for English as a Second Language (ESL) and Actualisation Linguistique en Français (Cumming, Hart, Corson, & Cummins, 1993). A surprising finding from that survey was that most boards of education in Ontario did not report serious financial difficulties in meeting the heavy ESL demands that they face. Problems were certainly identified, but there was little that boards felt they should be doing that they were not already doing. However, in their replies to the survey there was little reference by boards to anti-bias issues of any kind. This is puzzling, since Ministry policies in this area have had a very high profile of late (MET, 1992, 1993). If boards are following Ministry policy, there is much more that they *should* be doing in this area than they appear to be, whether their ESL students are in reception/withdrawal classes or integrated into regular classrooms with ESL support.

Anti-racism and Ethnocultural Equity Policies in Ontario

To monitor board progress in implementing policies of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity, the Ministry of Education and Training established the following criteria for "student languages":

- Students perceive that their first language is being valued by the school.
- Multilingualism is actively promoted.
- Appropriate heritage language and/or native language programs are in place.
- An effective language learning support program is in place.

- Consideration is given to the special linguistic challenges faced by ESL/ALF students in using regular curriculum materials (MET, 1993, pp. 14–15 & 19).

Although this list is no more than a beginning point for ESL teachers, just the first criterion on its own seriously challenges current educational practices in Ontario. How can the many different first languages that exist here be valued by schools in more than token ways? Using this criterion, the Ministry is trying to guarantee the right of all children to attend a school that shows full respect for the language that is learned at home or that is valued most by them, including respect for its role in preserving important ethnic, traditional, social, gender, or religious values and interests. In the brief space available to me here, I can give no detail about the many possible ways to go about doing this. But there are a range of approaches that schools can adopt to value minority languages, even when all classroom activities are conducted only in official languages. For example, see Cummins & Danesi (1990, Chapter 6) and Corson (1990, Chapters 6, 7, & 10).

The Need for More General Anti-Bias Policies and Practices

ESL teachers deal with children who are vulnerable in many different ways. Almost always, ESL students come from a cultural background that is different from the dominant culture; usually their family income is below the average for their community and their parents' occupations place them among the poorer working classes in society; often they have a religious background that is different from the Canadian mainstream; and sometimes the values and responses of female ESL students are very different from those of their male peers.

I think that we need more general anti-bias policies and practices, certainly in ESL work and perhaps in other areas too. Anti-bias policies embrace anti-racist, anti-sexist, and all other forms of discrimination. More general anti-bias policies are more likely to work than single dimensional policies for several reasons. Since anti-bias policies extend to all the different groups of people who meet bias in school systems, many more people can be convinced of their relevance. Also children can come to see how forms of discrimination operate against other groups, as well as against their own. Moreover when one group of people are the victims of several kinds of discrimination at once, the real injustices for them tend to multiply. In other words, children with several stigmatized attributes, deriving from their racial, gender, and social class background, are more often a target of bias than children with only one, and discrimination for the former can be more severe.

Without touching all the forms of bias that operate in our society, let me list some practices that can intrude into the work of ESL teachers.

Six Sets of Biased Practices

1) Cultural and Racial Bias

While many ESL teachers in Ontario are not members of the dominant culture, few can avoid bringing an ethnocentric perspective to their work, since the things that each person most values are usually the residue of knowledge, beliefs, and experiences that they receive from a single culture. A few ESL students have teachers from their own culture. But the majority enter classrooms where their own cultural sensitivities and values contrast markedly with those of their teachers. Whenever this is the case, ESL teachers have a difficult role. As they work to give students a knowledge of English, they are inevitably giving prestige to the dominant culture in Canada. How to do this, without devaluing the children's own cultures, is no simple task. So probably the best place to start is with language experiences related directly to the children's own cultures.

Following George Dei's advice (1993), this type of teaching calls for opening up and exploring the discourse around non-Western definitions and categories, drawing wherever possible on indigenous

knowledge systems. But this is no easy pedagogical formula. There are dangers in the power relationships that cross-cultural teaching of this kind creates. Only individual teachers in real settings can detect and minimize these dangers. Not least is the problem of creating a sensitive context where the painful memories that many refugee and immigrant students carry with them, can be given voice.

While cultural bias is directed against people holding the values of another culture, racial bias is most often directed against people who have a different skin colour. In Ontario ESL settings, racial bias is best confronted by constant scrutiny of pedagogical practices and styles that alienate visible minority students and lower their self-esteem. Several of the other forms of bias below are relevant here too. Above all, ESL teachers need to be critically aware of their own languages practices, which is a prerequisite for helping children to develop *critical language awareness*.

2) "Linguicism"

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas uses the term "linguicism" to suggest a parallel form of bias to "racism." The target of linguicism is a speaker of another language rather than the member of another race. The conventional policy in education for dealing with speakers of other languages has been to ignore the first language of minority children and to replace it with the dominant language of education (Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988). In the ESL context this is English. An educational system serving a multilingual society, but providing only schooling where one language is

valued, unavoidably infringes on the rights of speakers of minority languages. Moreover, evidence confirms that there are important educational gains for second language students when their first language is maintained. Bilingual schooling has cognitive advantages for the learner. Also the maintenance of minority children's first languages is an effective aid in several ways: it promotes their learning of the majority language; it develops their self-confidence; and it improves access to further education (for summaries of the evidence, see Corson, 1990, 1993). Putting an end to bias against other languages begins with finding a place of prestige for those languages in the school's discourse practices.

3) Bias Against Non-standard Varieties

Injustice occurs when children without the standard version of a language enter education, where the standard variety is considered "correct." Some children start out in schools with more of this resource than others, and are consistently rewarded for its possession. In Ontario, English Skills Development (ESD) teachers work with children who use a non-standard variety of English. These students can come from any English-speaking country, sometimes from within Canada. Although ESD teaching is a very important role that deserves high recognition, the very fact that teachers need to do this kind of work suggests that schooling, as a social institution, is biased against non-standard users.

Often standard English is used uncritically as the model of excellence against which other varieties are measured; and

non-standard users come to see their own varieties as things of lesser worth. In most school settings, the standard variety is more practical, not because of its "correctness" but because of its greater "appropriateness." Although in some contexts, there are strong justice grounds for preferring a non-standard variety over the standard as the language of schooling, in every context it is important to value the language variety that children bring from their home community into schools and to do so in ways that enhance the critical awareness that all children have about the social and historical events that produce language varieties (Corson, 1993).

A related issue is the role of non-standard varieties in creating teacher stereotypes. The evidence of language itself is central in activating negative teacher attitudes towards the speech of culturally and socially different children, thus affecting teacher expectations, which in turn affect pupil performance. A general finding of research is that teachers' perceptions of children's non-standard speech produces negative expectations about the children's personalities, social backgrounds, and academic abilities. ESL and ESD teachers are not immune to these prejudices, which affect all of us to some extent at least.

4) Bias Against the Discourse Norms of Children with Different Cultural Values

Many educational difficulties for children from minority cultures are due to sociolinguistic interference. Yet ESL teachers are often unaware of the impact on school learning of subtle differences in the language norms that minority children bring to school. Teachers sometimes see minority children as unresponsive, as disruptive, or as slow learners. They overlook the fact that members of a minority culture bring an understanding of their culture's own participant norms for interaction that may be very different from the dominant pattern. These norms are expressions of the minority culture's values. They provide informal rules which govern speaking, listening, and turn-taking behaviours. Many studies now confirm the prevalence of inappropriate classroom and school contexts of interaction for minority children (Corson, 1993). Information about these subtle differences in minority children's language norms, rarely appears in the professional training of teachers. It often falls outside the taken-for-granted reality of

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professional policy and practice in education, even for ESL professionals who are centrally concerned with matters of language. As a result, this is a key area for unintended bias in the everyday practices of ESL teachers.

5) Bias Against the Discourse Norms of Girls

Often there are pronounced differences between the discourse norms of ESL girl and boy students, even from the same culture. Cross-cultural studies of gender and language and studies of language socialization confirm that language plays a highly diverse role in the social construction of gender and that the effects of socialization through language appear very early in children's lives. But schooling in general tends to favour the discourse norms of boys rather than of girls.

In every culture, differences in the discourse norms of men and women can be traced back to differences between boys and girls that are largely modelled on differences between men and women. Because these differences are often reinforced by current school language policies, girls can be excluded from participation in the intellectually developing activities at middle and higher levels of education because those activities favour discourse norms closer to those of boys. Directly relevant to the practices of ESL teachers, studies that address the interaction of gender, culture, and language highlight the special injustices that girls from minority backgrounds often meet when their discourse norms and styles of interaction are overlooked or misrecognized (Biggs & Edwards, 1991; Corson, 1993).

6) Bias Against Exceptional ESL Students

An important point in avoiding this kind of bias is to remember that exceptional children will be no less represented among ESL children than among other children. Teachers can expect to find just as many gifted and talented students among their ESL pupils as are found in other groups, and they will also find as many students with disabilities, but again no more than the average for other groups.

A frequent arena of bias for exceptional ESL students is in language assessment. Jim Cummins (1984) provides a major reference in this area, so I summarize some of his points below:

The task in assessment is for teachers to separate the effects of the children's language barrier from the effects of their language disorders.

For ESL children already diagnosed as having language disorders, assessment and instruction should be mainly oriented towards helping them interact with others or with a written text not towards the production of language forms. The task in assessment is for teachers to separate the effects of the children's language barrier from the effects of their language disorders. This can only come from attending to their practical competence in both the first and second languages.

For minority children already diagnosed as hearing-impaired, descriptive assessment in both languages is of more value than normative assessment. If bias against deaf signing students is a possibility, a sign language should be included (Branson & Miller, 1994). In any case, the focus should be on what children have developed rather than on what they lack.

For minority children who may be candidates for gifted and talented programs, teacher observation must play the major role in identifying them. One piece of evidence may be rapid progress in learning the majority tongue, assuming that five to seven years is the average time needed for minority children to catch up in their use of the language for academic work. A major practice helping gifted children display their talent is curricular and extra-curricular activities that encourage that display.

Conclusion

In several places I have mentioned the place of "critical language awareness" work in ESL anti-bias practices. Teachers have a special responsibility here. It seems miseducative to me to equip immigrant and refugee students with English, while not awakening in them a critical view of the language itself and of

its relationship to other languages.

Critical language awareness involves three kinds of pedagogical practices (Corson, 1993). By promoting *social awareness of discourse*, ESL teachers can encourage students to approach cultural meanings more critically rather than take them for granted. Working within this theme, students examine why access to certain types of discourse is restricted and how imbalances in access affect individuals and groups. By promoting *critical awareness of variety*, ESL teachers can encourage students to examine why some languages and varieties are different in status from others; why they are valued differently in different settings; what historical events have produced different valuations of language varieties; and what effects devaluing a language variety has upon its users. Finally, when they promote *awareness of the possibility of reforming language practices and practice for future changes*, ESL teachers are engaging in the most emancipatory form of teaching possible: encouraging students to contribute to improving wider practices.

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Exposing Young Minds to Equity

The Toronto Board of Education

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In the 15 years since the approval of its race relations report in 1979, the Toronto Board of Education has developed numerous and varied initiatives ranging from a "hate groups" response team, to in-service sensitivity training for staff, South Asian, Vietnamese, and Black studies courses for teachers, and an annual race-relations camp and gender issues retreat for secondary school students. The race relations report occasioned the establishment of an Equal Opportunity Office and although the political composition of the Board has shifted several times during this period, there has been a steady development of the organizational resources focused on confronting equity issues.

The Equal Opportunity Office was originally charged with monitoring the implementation of the new race relations recommendations but it was soon divided between two advisors, one focussing on race and the other on women's issues. These two advisors did both joint and separate programming across the institution.

In 1984 the responsibilities for curriculum issues were moved to a curriculum co-ordinator for Multiculturalism and Race Relations while a Women's and Labour Studies co-ordinator position took on the responsibilities for curriculum change and development in those fields. During this period, four special student worker positions were also established to work directly with students on the implementation of equity policies.

A major reorganization of equity work took place in the early '90s when the Equity Studies Centre was established in the curriculum division and two new consultant positions were created. A third advisor position, focussing on issues affecting Native peoples was also established.

The result of this support has been the development of a strong network of progressive educators involved in a wide

range of issues in their schools. In many cases, schools have formed equity committees instead of simply choosing a race relations representative or an affirmative action rep. We have come to understand that policy itself does not lead to institutional change unless there is an active and assertive group of people willing to use policy as a weapon in their struggle to change day-to-day practices. In spite of official sanction, institutions as large and complex as a board of education are the site of many kinds of resistance to change, both individual and structural. Our efforts are aimed at developing leadership skills in our students so that they may become advocates for systemic change. Parent and community groups often exert the needed pressure upon our education system to best meet the unique needs of students from all communities.

The Elementary Panel — Some Unique Challenges

Our programs have attempted to infuse anti-racist education directly into the curriculum and the daily practices of classroom teachers. We have continued to modify our resource material so that it addresses other forms of discrimination more thoroughly and reaches out to younger students. It has been our experience that elementary students are not only able to discuss inequalities in society but are also able to learn how to challenge injustice when they see it.

In the past few years, we have begun working with eight-year-old students at the Grade 3 level and have achieved some promising results. In producing age appropriate material which stresses how racism works in society, we begin with some basic realities of our classrooms today. Our initial message to students is simple:

1. Differences exist.
2. Differences are good.
3. Unfair treatment of differences exists.
4. We want to challenge that unfair treatment and stop it in our schools!

Four years ago, a group of students return-

ing from our Grade 7 and 8 anti-racist leadership camp chose to form a club which they called STARS (Students and Teachers Against Racism and Sexism). This concept has broadened considerably and a number of schools now use a variety of acronyms to describe the proactive equity work sponsored by student clubs.

The STARS program itself has also been formalized and is offered to schools each year as an important part of classroom instruction. A student program worker from the equal opportunity office and the classroom teacher lead students through activities designed to challenge racism, sexism, class bias, and (in the senior grades) issues of homophobia. A special STARS Equity Kit has been prepared which includes co-operative exercises, role plays, and strategies for students to model positive behaviour.

Most senior schools have developed advisory or mentoring groups, which provide an ideal place for staff and students to explore issues of equity. These groups consist of small numbers of senior students and staff who meet on a frequent basis. The trusting relationships that develop between staff and students encourage more student participation. Of further significance is the fact that these groups are seen as part of the school day; therefore, equity work is not viewed as an "add on" or a voluntary extra-curricular club.

In a number of elementary schools, equity themes have been introduced to the whole school through a special activity day or conference format. Facilitators and teachers work together with students to learn more about different forms of discrimination and then devise an action plan for their school. The plan is monitored by the staff and student committee and may be shared with parents at a school/community open house, for their input. Having used this activity day as a "launch," students can continue to explore issues of discrimination on a regular basis in their advisory groups.

An important point to remember is that our work should culminate in allowing students to voice what they think are the major issues in their school. They should be encouraged to share, rather than be silenced. They should be given the tools necessary to develop a realistic action plan for themselves and for the school. Their work will be made easier if we as educators model behaviour which challenges all forms of discrimination.

Some Approaches to Anti-Racist Education

Anti-racism should be concerned with all forms of oppression and domination.

The Need for a Politics of Difference

Challenging Monolithic Notions

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After the 1992 riots in Toronto on Yonge Street, the Ontario NDP government commissioned an investigation of black community allegations of racism. The resultant Stephen Lewis Report documented that racism in the province of Ontario seems to be mainly anti-black racism. Despite Lewis's report of virulent anti-black racism and the urgent need for anti-racism strategies, the debates on and around what exactly constitutes anti-racism continue to rage. I believe that we need to take stock of what anti-racism suggests and means (see Thomas, 1987) and that we need to resist particularly any inclinations to interpret it primarily as a project about enabling the self-esteem of black folks. For anti-racism to be theoretically and practically strong, I contend that it should be understood as an attempt to take seriously *the politics of difference*.

By the politics of difference, I mean to suggest that anti-racism should be concerned with all forms of oppression and domination. Anti-racism should take the heterogeneity of groups in society (i.e., multiple differences) as the assumed underpinning of its praxis (i.e., practice based in theory). Recognition not only of black difference but also of the complex and shifting differences among visible minority and other marginalized groups is essential to anti-racism pedagogy.

Drawing on the work of Cameron McCarthy (1990), I want to begin by pointing to the importance of the concept of non-synchrony — that is, not reducing differences or multiple characteristics to a single category. Black people, like any other people, live in varying socio-economic classes, they live in or come from

different geographical/cultural environments, they have varying sexual orientations, and so on. The importance of recognizing the fact of non-synchrony lies in the ways in which multicultural curricula have allowed the current organization of schooling to use "race" and "ethnicity" as synonymous with — or inclusive of — gender, sex, class, and so on, thus avoiding the need to address the ways in which difference and contradiction work in "minority" relations within institutions like schools (McCarthy, 1990, p. 83). For example, using "race" as synonymous with other socio-cultural differences would not explain why it is that young black women do better in schools than young black men. Also using "race" as inclusive of "sex" would not necessarily explain the experiences of gay and lesbian youth of colour in schools. If we assume non-synchrony, we can develop an analysis that does not reduce difference to a single category that then legitimates the neglect or exclusion of other important variables of social difference.

McCarthy argues that current approaches to anti-racism and multicultural education have produced a monolithic notion of blackness. He further demonstrates that while black people might have a common history of enslavement and oppression in the Americas, that oppression has been experienced differently for different people according to class, gender, sex, and, I would add, colour. What those differences mean is that approaches to how black people are treated in the school system should be understood as always complicated by a number of other variables that impact on how they live their lives. The ways in which certain forms of racism affect working-class blacks can be and often is different from how they will affect middle-class blacks who have more access to specific resources of the dominant culture (i.e., cultural access and privilege acquired through

being a member of the preferred class, gender, sex, etc.). To further demonstrate the complexity of the issue, I would suggest that in most cases systemic oppression for black women is mediated through what Himani Bannerji has called "sexist racism." Thus the practice of anti-racism must avoid any attempt to synchronize (i.e., align the inter-group differences) or to make singular the experiences and histories of a heterogeneous group into a monolithic narrative of oppression.

In this article, I use M. Nourbese Philip's *Harriet's Daughter* (1988), a novel that has been taught to Grade 9 students in a number of Toronto schools, to explore what a politics of difference approach would mean in light of secondary schooling initiatives to implement an anti-racism pedagogy.

A Novel of Non-synchrony: *Harriet's Daughter*

In the novel, the two protagonists provide our first encounters with a non-synchronous blackness. Margaret is a Canadian-born young black woman and her friend Zulma is a recent immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago. While both of them share the history and legacy of slavery, there are also fundamental differences that separate them. In fact it is only through a game ("The Harriet Tubman Game" in which many of the historical roles are reversed: white kids play slaves and so on) as well as Margaret's growing awareness of the black diaspora — that is, how blacks have been scattered from their original community — that the two become good friends, able to communicate across their differences. Zulma speaks an English (or what Philip in other places has called a demotic) that is different from Margaret's; the latter knows little about the island that Zulma has come from, and they have different cultural etiquette about what is acceptable to ask and what is not; Margaret has a cosmopolitan sensibility about her that Zulma does not.

The differences that exist between Margaret and Zulma are important ones and should not be ignored. The experience of being an immigrant is quite different from being born in Canada, whether or not both persons are black. Place as in geography, citizenship, and nation is important to understanding Margaret's and Zulma's differences. The differences that exist between Zulma and Margaret

Anti-racism on the other hand challenges the very fundamentals of schooling and suggests strongly that some rethinking needs to be done.

raise crucial questions in terms of what emphases are given importance in the pedagogical choices of anti-racism in any North American school today. Are those choices going to focus on the experience and history of migration? Are the practices of anti-racism pedagogy going to address the ways in which exclusionary practices have denied some members of the society their historical and contemporary claims to citizenship? Or is anti-racism as pedagogical practice going to address the ways in which all forms of domination work to exclude anyone who is positioned or imagined to be outside the structures of citizenship and normality?

Zulma's main problem is a feeling of exile from Tobago and her grandmother with whom she had grown up, while her mother immigrated to Canada. Philip raises here the very complex issue of how some immigrant families have been divided for so long that they and their children have had to get to know each other again, sometimes failing with disastrous effects. That such problems (e.g., some of the effects of migration) do not affect all black students in schools is one of the first differences that anti-racism pedagogy should take seriously. The ways in which Zulma's and Margaret's problems and informal education are resolved in Philip's novel point to the challenges that a politics of difference demands of anti-racism pedagogy.

Zulma's return to Tobago and a reunion with her grandmother is made possible through an inheritance that Margaret receives. The inheritance comes from Mrs. Blewchamp. Mrs. Blewchamp was a woman whom Harriet (Margaret's mother) had worked for when she first came to Canada. Mrs. Blewchamp was Jewish and had escaped the Nazis during World War II. Philip, as author of a work

ostensibly about blackness and one immigrant child's experience, places on the pedagogical agenda questions of the Holocaust and Jewish otherness. Philip does this by revealing that Mrs. Blewchamp had numbers on her hand. Those tell-tale markers of Nazi terror make the pedagogy of anti-racism much more complex in relation to thinking about teaching Philip's work and the pedagogical choices one might make. By placing Mrs. Blewchamp in the story as essential to Zulma's "emancipation" Philip asks us to consider the complex relations of domination and subordination and their application across racial/ethnic differences.

To attempt to incorporate Philip's novel into existing school curriculum would mean that current definitions of anti-racism would have to acknowledge the complex relationships of difference as important to the pedagogy of anti-racism. By that I mean that anti-racism would have to take all forms and histories of oppression as central to its practice. Mrs. Blewchamp symbolically represents other histories and forms of oppression that have been and continue to be markers of a diasporic or displaced people. Anti-racism as pedagogical practice should be fluid enough to shift between the various historically manifested forms of racism and oppression to produce analyses that do not dissipate past or contemporary differences but attempt representations and inclusion of the complex nature of difference.

Many of us have been concerned about the recent discussion both in Canada and the United States about the relations between blacks and Jews. Some readers may see my analysis as an attempt at diluting the focus of anti-racism on visible minorities. It is, however, the case that "jewishness" and "blackness" are both social and cultural constructions that tend to produce narratives of "oneness." By that I mean that too often the ways in which blackness and jewishness are discussed produce a picture in which the cultural members of both groups are represented as if they do not have important and conflicting differences in and among themselves. Thus it remains important that those of us committed to social change recognize that it is a fiction when any of these cultures appear to be synchronized either from outside or from inside the community. Both blacks and Jews are differentiated by class relations, gender, sex, and colour

(lest we forget the debates about the evacuation of Ethiopian Jews to Israel that centred on whether or not they were really Jews).

Redefining Anti-Racist Pedagogy

If anti-racism is incapable of addressing the complex and shifting relations of domination, it will become what multicultural education has become. Multicultural education currently serves to include only static historical information about particular groups without having to make any major shifts in the ways in which schooling is currently organized. Those arrangements are liberal notions of inclusion that do not take seriously claims that

old ways of doing schooling cannot adequately address nor manage the incorporation of "new" information that requires "new" practices. Anti-racism on the other hand challenges the very fundamentals of schooling and suggests strongly that some rethinking needs to be done.

The challenge for those of us who advocate anti-racism is to understand and begin with the assumption of black difference coupled with a complex reading and analysis of the practices of domination. Any attempt to synchronize blackness will result at best in piecemeal changes, and it is only by understanding anti-racism as the practice of a politics of difference that we can begin to practise a pedagogy that does not produce exclu-

sions that reinforce the practices of domination. Teachers must shift from the easy multicultural assumption of "tribal sameness" to one of "difference within and without" as a first place to practise anti-racist pedagogy.

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The Anti-Racist Dimensions of Holocaust Education

The Underlying Principles

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Anti-racist education itself does not represent a single viewpoint but should be seen as an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of views and criticisms of the educational system. However, within the range of views presented in the anti-racist education literature, there exists a consensus on its chief underlying principles. I will expand on these principles below and then turn to my recent study of a Holocaust Education curriculum in a Toronto high school.¹

Anti-racist education addresses racism as inherent in society's structure and institutions. Of primary importance in the understanding of how racism is reproduced in society is the concept of institutional racism, defined by one anti-racist writer as "that racism which exists in laws, rules, regulations, hidden or overt agendas, procedures and processes which

directly or indirectly initiate, promote, propagate racism within (an) institution" (Brandt, 1986, p. 111). The focus on the importance of institutional racism determines that anti-racist education includes an inquiry into the role that societal and state institutions and hence the state itself plays in intentionally or non-intentionally maintaining racist outcomes, racist practices, and racism itself. In this way anti-racist education becomes concerned with racism, the state, and the political process.

That critical thinking be placed at the heart of the anti-racist education project is agreed upon by a variety of anti-racist writers. For Barry Troyna, anti-racist education should encourage students "to become informed sceptics who are able to take a critical stance towards ideological information and to act with empathy and humanitarianism" (Troyna & Carrington, 1990, p. 97). Phillip Cohen says that "... what the children should be learning through this ... is to become more sensitive — we might even say allergic to slogans, stereotypes and one dimensional

imagery of every kind" (Cohen, 1989, p. 245). Godfrey Brandt lists questions that teachers should ask themselves to ensure that the syllabus they are working from includes the fundamentals of anti-racism. "Does it [the curriculum in question] open up the opportunity for pupils' critical engagement with the subject matter? Will it help further stimulate pupils' critical powers? Does it leave room for change, adjustment, new questions?" (1986, pp. 140, 141). In fact anti-racist education is seen by anti-racist writers as so entwined with the activity of independent critical thought that the Canadian educator, Charles Novogrodsky calls the embracing of critical thinking, developing an "anti-racist cast of mind" (1989, p. 1).

Related to the issue of fostering critical thought are the pedagogical tools appropriate for this endeavour. Many anti-racist writers have expressed the maxim that the goals of anti-racist education and the means or pedagogy must be congruent. In describing what a collaborative pedagogy would look and feel like, Roger Simon and colleagues, in *Decoding Discrimination* state that their approach requires the teacher's role to be defined as a co-student (1988, p. 9), that it is important that the teacher be able to provide an open, non-threatening climate that encourages and values student dialogue. This climate will, they maintain, "promote a toleration of and listening to expressions of difference (p. 10)."

The central tenets of Jim Cummins's model of an anti-racist collaborative peda-

gogy, *Empowering Minority Students*, include: genuine dialogue between student and teacher, encouragement of student-student talk in a collaborative learning context, and a focus on developing higher cognitive skills. This model underscores the importance of an open, non-authoritarian framework where teachers and students engage in dialogue as co-learners, developing their abilities in tandem.

In short, there is agreement among anti-racist writers that the traditional didactic approach is not appropriate and that a non-authoritarian collaborative approach to teaching/learning is necessary for any anti-racist project to have integrity. Stress on the engagement with racism, critical thinking, and a commitment to collaborative pedagogy which in turn reshapes the role of teacher into a co-learner form the cornerstones of the foundation of anti-racist education.

Case Study

During the school year of 1990/91, I conducted a case study in an OAC English literature class in a Toronto alternative high school. The purpose of this study was to examine the *The Holocaust and Human Behaviour: Facing History and Ourselves*² curriculum as it was delivered to determine whether this educational project was complementary to the principles and practice of anti-racist education. The findings of this study have some general implications for anti-racist education.

The school is located in a working class multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Toronto, Canada's largest and most multi-racial, multi-ethnic city. The class had 16 students, six male and ten females. The background of the students was overwhelmingly second or third generation English Canadian, American, or British. Hence, the students in the case study were not ethnically or racially representative of the general population of Toronto but were perhaps representative of the alternative school population. (Alternative schools have been criticized for being academic safe havens for middle class, majority group students.) As a group and individually, the students were outspoken and articulate and seemed very aware of and engaged with current political/ social issues.

The teacher of the course was a dynamic, experienced person whose impassioned commitment both to the issues examined

in the curriculum and to the intellectual development of her students was evident not only to me, a participant-observer of her class, but also seemed to be acknowledged and appreciated by the students. The mutual affection between students and teacher resulted in a lively accepting atmosphere in the class, an ideal setting for learning and especially anti-racist learning to take place.

As mentioned, the curriculum *The Holocaust and Human Behaviour: Facing History and Ourselves* was used for this course. Some adaptations were made to make the course reflect Canadian history and Canadian social issues. The course was organized around three main themes, selected from the curriculum: The History of Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Discrimination, The Historical Social Background to the Holocaust, and the Holocaust and Its Victims. In the following paragraphs I will outline how this curriculum and the course adapted from it exemplified the main tenets of anti-racist education.

1. Understanding Racism

The first of theme of the curriculum — The History of Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Discrimination — introduces one of the organizing concerns of the course, racism and its myriad manifestations. It begins with an overview of the history of anti-Semitism from the Crusades to the present. The theme also deals with other forms of racial discrimination that have had historical roots in North America. An interrogation of modern stereotypes, especially ones that the students are likely to encounter, was also included.

The second theme, the Historical and Social Background to the Holocaust, introduces the students to the broad outline of German history from World War I to the Holocaust events. The curriculum attempts to help students understand how a dominant culture of prejudice and state-instituted exclusionary practices can come together to form a society in which racism is normalized. As a case study of Nazi institutionalized racism, the curriculum is a powerful springboard from which to launch an examination of how state-supported racism can exist in any society, including our own. Students studied examples in Canadian history including Canada's treatment of the Canadian Japanese community during World War

II, and Canada's refusal to accept a meaningful number of Jewish immigrants fleeing from Nazism.

Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to examine the role of individuals as moral agents in situations that make choice difficult and ethical behaviour unpopular or even dangerous. As a consequence, the students' understanding of racism as a product of social conditioning is deepened, and their acknowledgment of the possibility of ethical behaviour and individual responsibility is called upon.

2. Critical Thinking

The *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum echoes the commitment to critical thinking of most anti-racist writers and is designed to sharpen the facility of critical thinking. The curriculum seeks to foster cognitive growth by having at its heart a set of questions. The students are asked to consider and reconsider these open-ended questions throughout the course. These questions include: "How is an environment of mass conformity and racism created?" "How does a nation move from protecting its minorities to defining them as the enemy?" "Why and how did some individuals defy the power of the state despite the dangers they incurred?"

This methodology, based on questioning and striving for an evolving understanding of racism, the role of ideology, and the moral agency of individuals, undergirds the curriculum and, in my opinion, fosters the ability to think critically. By asking and re-asking central questions, the student is encouraged to allow him or herself the opportunity to change his or her own answers, let answers evolve, and become aware that the "answers" are becoming more and more complicated as more information is received. In short, this methodology facilitates critical thinking.

3. Collaborative Teaching/Learning

For egalitarianism to be taken seriously by students, it must be present in the classroom. The *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum also supports the use of collaborative pedagogy. The curriculum encourages the teacher to come to this complex and demanding Holocaust material not as a teacher but as a whole person — this is in the hopes that the teachers'

honest reaction, and active engagement with issues encourage the students to be likewise engaged. In this way the teachers and students become co-learners.

The teacher was an excellent example of this co-learner role. Throughout the course, she shared her enthusiasm and commitment to the issues discussed, never portraying herself as a neutral facilitator. Instead she was an active participant in the discussions, always being honest with the students about her feelings, reactions, and about her own, always evolving, partial "answers" to questions and debates. She often did not "answer" students questions but instead would say to them "Hold that question, come back to it in a few days/weeks when we have examined the issue in some more detail." And, without fail, she did just that. She would remind the student of his or her prior question and ask if he or she were any closer to an "answer."

The complicated and sometimes unanswerable questions and the emotionally challenging material made this course one which is uniquely suited to an egalitarian pedagogy. No one can ever be an expert about the difficult human and ethical questions posed by the events of the Holocaust; each of us can only be a co-learner and co-traveller along the unending path to understanding.

The Students' Reaction

As part of the course requirements, each student was required to keep a personal journal and specific entries were assigned. The following excerpts from these diaries and from interviews I conducted with each student illustrate the links that the students made between the Holocaust issues discussed and the moral decisions that they faced in their own lives. These words are affirmation that anti-racist education did take place.

One student wrote about changes in her own behaviour that she maintains were precipitated by her involvement in the course:

I make a stand about it [discrimination] now with my friends.... Well, on New Year's Eve ... we were at a friend's house and then a couple of boys that I didn't know ... started insulting homosexuals and just being really nasty and I couldn't let it go on so I stood up [to them] and then one of them left the party because I offended him. To me this was better than

not having said anything.... And now one of my friends that used to say things won't ever say anything to me again.

This student's willingness to take a stand was echoed by another student who I will call Christine. At the beginning of the course, Christine had been angry with herself for her inability and unwillingness to stand up and speak out against an anti-Semitic remark made by a co-worker. At the end of the course, Christine described a somewhat similar incident and her different response to it. She writes about going out to a restaurant with some friends:

After a long and delicious dinner ... [I went] to the washroom. While sitting on the cool seat I looked over to see a swastika and Heil Hitler in permanent black marker. My anger and rage built up and with toilet paper and soap I tried to rub it off. When I saw that my effort was not doing anything, I stormed out of the washroom. I got back to the table and was asked what was wrong. I told of my effort. It was suggested that I tell the manager and I did. In a small little way I challenged racism and other people who might have been offended won't be.

Students not only wrote about their emerging willingness to stand up against racist incidents, they also wrote with great honesty about the complexity of the issues presented and of their own personal failings and inadequacies. One student wrote:

I would love to think of myself as a complete opposite of [sadistic] people.... But I am not sure. How many times have I walked by people begging — asking for spare change? It's so easy to pretend the homeless aren't real. It's so easy to think, indignantly, that they'd just spend any money on booze or alcohol.... I would like to deny that such a thing — sadism, insensitivity towards other people — exists let alone exists in me, but I can't quite do so without being completely dishonest.

Another student, Sandra echoes these self-doubts and concern about the individual's role and responsibility in society:

I would like to think that I would have had the sense to disobey ... that I would not be led too easily into hurting a human being.... [The course] showed me that it does not take an evil person to serve an evil system, it just takes an obedient one.

These quotes were representative of

the thoughts and moral deliberations presented in the students' journals and shared in interviews. Students were making connections between the events of the Holocaust and other histories of racism and inequalities (e.g. anti-gay, anti-poor sentiments). They were looking at issues of moral and social complexity and considering the importance of individual resistance and action. It is my conviction that these internal activities are the essence of good anti-racist education. One student wrote these determined words:

I know if I can stop one person from stereotypes and name calling, I am doing my job.... Before this course I knew what happened [the Holocaust] but now I have internalized knowledge. With this I will do my best to stop things before they begin.

It is my belief that this course has helped her towards acting on this resolution.³

NOTES

1. I conducted this study as part of my dissertation, "Building Bridges: The Anti-Racist Dimensions of Holocaust Education." The thesis is currently being revised for publication by the University of Toronto Press.

2. *Holocaust and Human Behaviour: Facing History and Ourselves* is a curriculum text that was written in 1982 by Margot Stern Strom and William S. Parsons. They co-founded the U.S. education foundation, Facing History and Ourselves, which produces text materials and teachers' aids and also conducts teacher-training sessions on how to teach controversial issues concerning ethical and democratic behaviour. This foundation has made an impact on a national scale in the United States and its materials are available at the Toronto Board of Education.

3. Another Holocaust curriculum for Grade 10 students of English Literature, "Racism Today: Echoes of the Holocaust," written by Harold Lass and Carole Ann Reed, is currently in press with Pacific Education Press, Vancouver.

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Multiculturalism and the Concept of a Non-Racial Society

A Perspective on Teacher Education

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In the more than 25 years that I have been involved in teacher education, the central focus of much of my work has been multicultural education.

In earlier articles on the subject of what is variously called multicultural, intercultural, anti-racist, cross-cultural, human rights education, I suggested that the arbitrary, authoritarian, or didactic definitions of what is and what is not multicultural education, and the claims and counter-claims, are rather unproductive and more political and polemical than real.

Indeed in a recent address to the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Professor Audrey Kobayashi asked whether people working in the field of multicultural and anti-racist education were in fact reifying race by speaking of race, race relations, anti-racism as if humans were not one. Professor Kobayashi's critique, inadequately abbreviated here, suggested that we must reconceptualize and analyse the effects of what we are saying and writing. I agree. In this field so fraught with unintended results or effects, my own view is that the best alternative to the present polemical debate over multiculturalism and anti-racism is to opt for the concept of a "non-racial society."

If we are working to demonstrate that there is but one category called humans and if we are wishing to believe, as did the United Nations Commission headed by Ashley Montagu, in the immediate post World War II period, that there are only genetic pools with somewhat varying physical characteristics, then it is time we stopped speaking about races, race-relations, and anti-racism. All these terms

promote the idea that there are "races." To reiterate, if we are to deconstruct race and racism, we must continually emphasize that when people say "race" the term means at most genetic pools which result in the predominance of some physical characteristics. These bear no inherent relationship to cultural characteristics.

I have previously suggested, in an attempt to circumvent the polemical differences, that we opt for the rubric of human rights. I believe the concept of non-racialism is also needed to deconstruct race, race relations, and anti-racism. We should all be in the school of deconstructing race and racism.

Educating Classroom Teachers

In order to address the implications of these ideas for teacher education, one must refer to what a teacher must be able to do. These capabilities I would list as:

- 1) *Being able to understand and analyse human or cultural differences and similarities.* Teaching is a cultural process; therefore, teachers must be culturally knowledgeable. They must be able to be empathetic to all children and to work in a pluralistic community. Teachers must have a knowledge of how stereotypes and prejudice, systemic discrimination and power relationships, tolerance and human rights have been used and misused in education, and more generally, in various societies.
- 2) *Being able to establish a positive learning environment in terms of human relations.* Teachers select curriculum content and organize classroom education. Their knowledge of differing teaching strategies and methods is of prime importance as is

their knowledge of children, including in terms of development (cognitive and moral). Their community relations and involvement of parents is crucial too. Their own personal education must be more than adequate; their professional education must be excellent and comprehensive.

We are not all educated in all aspects of human relations, hence teacher education must supplement our general education with knowledge regarding prejudice and discrimination and tolerance and acceptance. Each teacher must also bring to the classroom those essentials for organizing learning, not simply curricula and resources but actual teaching strategies and methodologies. I include them here:

Principle Testing: This method involves providing students with a case study of some form of ethnic or racial discrimination. Students are asked to provide their assessment of the case and of the behaviour of the participants or subjects. The teacher then asks the students to evaluate their assessment with reference to the following questions or criteria:

- 1) How would your judgment of the participants' behaviour relate to or fit other cases?
- 2) How would you feel if you were the person being discriminated against? (Would you still think the same way?)
- 3) What would be the consequences if everyone engaged in similar behaviour in similar circumstances?
- 4) What principles did you apply in making your judgment? What other principles, laws, norms, or codes are involved or related to your judgment and principles?

Teachers and parents use aspects of principle testing in everyday life in getting others to think of the ramifications of beliefs and behaviour.

Contact Theory: Bringing people into contact was developed many years ago as an experiential way of breaking down barriers and developing relations. The research indicates that the chances of bringing about attitude and behaviour change are enhanced when the persons are of equal status, have a common goal or task, and where the experience is

enjoyable or satisfying. Even when there have been negative relations between groups or individuals, contact situations can produce positive results.

Conditioning: Research on conditioning has also shown it to be an effective strategy. Teachers use conditioning all the time through creating expectations or by establishing a learning atmosphere. They can do the same in ethnic and race relations: by their own actions, beliefs, and behaviour and by establishing positive expectations, goals, and patterns of behaviour.

Personal Factor: Research on what appears to be the most important common factor in their strategies indicates that the personal identification factor is most important — that is, establishing a means by which persons can relate to and identify directly with the situation or with people. This factor also may be particularly important in preventing discrimination and stereotyping. This research also implies that it is particularly important that students can personally identify with learning situations.

From the research on strategies, actual learning/teaching situations, and human relations, several factors which can positively affect ethnic and race relations can be identified. From the research on cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and general educational strategies and methods, we can identify some 12 factors that are particularly important to consider in establishing a positive learning environment regarding ethnic and race relations.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

- 1) *Use experiential learning or teaching techniques which directly involve the students' feelings, thoughts, and behaviour.* General educational practice and research has shown that by participating, doing, or taking part we experience education more directly. Learning is enhanced in both the cognitive and affective domains.
- 2) *Assist students to develop and maintain their self-esteem.* The way we feel about ourselves influences how well we learn and what we learn. All students, and most especially children at risk, may need assistance in devel-

oping or maintaining their self-esteem. You may want to refer to the research of Jack Canfield, or to your own personal experiences in how you have felt about yourself, how people have regarded you, and how those perceptions have affected your performance or achievements.

It is time to renew the planning for a multicultural society that is inclusive of all Canadians.

- 3) *Create enjoyable and satisfying learning experiences.* A sense of participation often makes learning more satisfying or enjoyable, as does a sense of accomplishment. Where students of different physical characteristics or ethnic backgrounds work together and where the experiences are enjoyable and satisfying, positive relations and attitudes are more likely to develop.
- 4) *Make ethnic, non-racial, and cultural learning experiences more personal and immediate.* The personal factor may be a one-to-one relationship or friendship that helps to avoid stereotypes and racist attitudes from developing, or it may be making more personal the understanding of how other persons are treated and feel through, for example, simulations and role-playing.
- 5) *Establish or help create common goals or tasks that involve all participants.* Even where there has been some difficulty between persons or groups, by carefully developing heterogeneous groups in educational settings and by having them work on a common goal or task, we can be creating a learning environment that is more likely to result in positive attitudes and behaviour.
- 6) *Create equality of status within the group.* It is important for teachers to treat all students as equal in status, to

have positive expectations of all students, and to expect all to participate in an equitable manner.

- 7) *Stress similarities more than differences and teach people how to cope with differences.* Research on practices in multicultural education has demonstrated that when we enhance or stress differences we may be making positive relationships more difficult. By stressing human similarities, we can assist people to see common basic human similarities; similarly, we can teach students how to cope with differences and even how to cope with discrimination.
- 8) *Emphasize equity and an inclusive curriculum throughout the school program.* Children aged three and four demonstrate attitudes to groups based upon familiarity (see Frances Aboud's book *Children and Prejudice*). We can start from kindergarten in teaching children that all people are equal. Similarly, we can teach people to understand other cultures. There is now recognition that this kind of teaching is as important during math and science, music and art, as it is in social studies, geography, or history.
- 9) *Emphasize positive expectations, behaviour, and attitudes.* The physical environment, from the pictures on the walls to the rules in schools, and the curriculum content and materials must portray pluralism. Similarly, positive human relations can be provided for through teaching children conflict resolution strategies and by using these strategies in the discipline process.
- 10) *Be exemplary.* We teach through example and consistency. We can teach equity and human rights and not condone discriminatory behaviour. School systems, schools, and teachers have gone public in being models and upholding models.
- 11) *Be aware of the level of critical thinking and moral reasoning of students.* By being aware of students' levels of moral reasoning and critical thinking, we can choose appropriate learning experiences and help them to further develop their skills. Students need the opportunities and experience to practise critical thinking and moral reasoning.

12) *Encourage community and parental involvement to improve student achievement.* The experience of teachers and the educational research both indicate that where there is community and parental involvement in the education of children and in the educational process, the likelihood of better educational achievement is enhanced.

Some of the above may seem obvious, but sometimes the most obvious things are neglected. You might develop a checklist to analyse how many of these factors implement are led in your classes and school program.

The Limitations

As a conclusion to this brief article on teacher education, I would like to stress three major points:

- 1) Deconstructing racism and other forms of discrimination is an on-going process. It is every teacher's responsibility. Just as people never cease finding reasons to discriminate against others, so people must never cease to work at deconstructing discrimination through education and educational institutions, as well as in the community.
- 2) Schools are one of the vehicles through which people can work at deconstructing racism and promoting non-racism. In some studies, researchers wonder why school programs are not more efficacious at countering racism. The support for racism and other forms of discrimination in the community and in the homes may be more than sufficient to counteract the learning taking place in school. However, there is a need for teachers to develop more effective and appropriate learning or

interventions based upon research.

- 3) Educational interventions that are based upon research rather than polemics and which utilize appropriate strategies and methodologies are needed. Students need to be provided with the opportunities to learn the cognitive, cultural, and social skills that help to deconstruct discrimination.

Compared to 1972, when I specifically began working with teachers in relation to pluralism, diversity, and equity, and used as a text Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice*, there is today a wealth of material available for grounding teachers in the best practices and good research.

It is time to rebuild the broad coalitions that are needed. It is time to renew the planning for a multicultural society that is inclusive of all Canadians. Education has an important role to play.

Maintaining the Tensions of Anti-Racist Education

The Transformation of Power Relations

The Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action Toronto

The editors of *Orbit* approached Barb Thomas, one of the core members of the Doris Marshall Institute (DMI), to write an article on our approach to anti-racism education. Barb accepted *Orbit's* invitation thinking that it could be used as an opportunity to identify the tensions in challenging racism as a mixed race group. Chris Cavanagh, Marlene Green, Tina Lopes, Alok Mukherjee, Gail Posen, and Barb Thomas participated in a taped discussion of the topic. Barb had further conversations with Jojo Geronimo and Venier Wong. She accepted the invitation to write the article, with these discussions serving as the basis.

However, when she tried to write as though we had a position, she quickly got into trouble. Barb's "draft" was then discussed by the group. Tina, Gail, and Alok

agreed to prepare the final version, with Chris doing the editing. It is important to document this writing process because of what it says about attempting to project a single voice for talking about racism.

Transforming the power relations between people of colour and Aboriginal people and white society is what anti-racist education is all about. These relations permeate institutions for the direct or indirect benefit of white people. Given this goal, we at the Doris Marshall Institute (DMI) have been asking ourselves whether anti-racism has become more comfortable than it would be if it were really challenging power relations. We need to ask whether the fight against oppressive and unjust social relations in Canada has been turned merely into a book of activities, a set of steps that, in fact, changes very little.

Four tensions emerge from our discussion which we recognize as integral to anti-

racist work. We outline them here as an invitation to more thinking and discussion.

Tension 1: Different Voices, Different Views

The tensions around voice are exemplified by our very process of writing this article. The invitation to Barb, was a generous one, but problematic in several respects. First, Barb is a white woman who does not experience racism. There is a mounting, legitimate critique of white people getting the space, resources, and recognition for anti-racism work, at the expense of Aboriginal people and persons of colour who fight racism every day.

Second, racism is not experienced similarly by all members of the DMI collective. The "DMI approach" to fighting racism recognizes that as people from different racial, cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds, we need to have different strategies for challenging racism. Any "DMI approach" must acknowledge these differences.

Anti-racist work must challenge each person to name and explore their own reasons for fighting racism, strengthen the voices and leadership of persons of colour and aboriginal persons in the fight against racism, insist that white people take responsibility for confronting racism and

assist white people in this when necessary, and challenge speakers and writers to make explicit their voices and locations and what their limits and possibilities are.

Tension 2: Transforming Power Relations

Anti-racist education is about transforming power relations in terms of who makes the key decisions as well as the values, beliefs, and ideas which constitute the organizational norms. In most Canadian organizations, including schools, colleges, and universities, the majority of people who make decisions are white. The "norms" which govern the life of these organizations are those of the dominant group in Canadian society (white Anglo-Saxon). It is when anti-racist work seeks such transformation that it comes to a grinding halt.

Anti-racist work in the education system must constantly challenge the frames through which educators and administrators explain the world and their own actions in it, address the conflict provoked when people challenge themselves and each other, and pressure those who have historically enjoyed access to power and resources to forge space for people of colour and aboriginal people to have their own share.

Canada's past and present have been profoundly shaped by racist forces. Effective anti-racism in schools insists on paying close attention to both the historical and current manifestations of racism, and to resistance by people of colour and aboriginal people. Following are three examples:

Immigration and refugee policy is tightening once again. Canadian governments have always tied immigration policy to a need for increased population, markets for goods, and job creation. Yet they have also been complicit in perpetrating the myth that increased immigration causes increased unemployment and other social ills. Recently, we have witnessed stunning efforts to equate society's violence with black young men and other "immigrants." Hasty reviews of rescinded deportation orders and loud calls for race-based crime statistics are an immediate threat in the lives of many Canadian children.

In a world where larger numbers of people(s) are desperately trying to escape famine and persecution, Europe, the

United States, and Canada are sealing their doors. A fractured sense of history does not help children or adults to understand connections between past and present global injustice and the movements of peoples. As one graffiti-covered wall in Brixton, London, England put it, "We are here because you were/are there."

A growing Aboriginal voice has been developing strength. Struggles for land claims, self-government, protection of environmental resources, and an end to military testing have forced non-aboriginal Canadians to recognize the presence of the Haida, Lubicon, Cree, Innu, Objibway, and Mohawk peoples. In 1992, on the 500th anniversary of Columbus's infamous voyage, many countries celebrated the European "discovery" of America while aboriginal peoples organized to commemorate centuries of life in the Americas before European invasion and the 500 years of resistance and survival since. (On the Victoria Day weekend, 1994, while white Canadians paraded in 18th-century military garb, aboriginal demonstrators reminded revellers that this was yet another celebration of the conquest of their communities.)

These examples and issues have a direct impact on curriculum in schools. Anti-racist education must: examine how unequal access to decision-making, resources, and health and well-being is maintained by different forms of racism; explore not only the victimization but the daily resistance to racism by peoples of colour and First Nations peoples; enable white children and adults to respect, honour, and learn from that history of resistance and to seek roles for themselves as effective allies; support First Nations children and adults, and children and adults of colour, as they continue to challenge racism individually and together; encourage individual and collective responsibility for recognizing and challenging the web of connections among racism, sexism, economic domination, ecological damage; and nourish a vision of sustainable community(ies) in which the health, well-being, contribution, and participation of all people are a priority.

Tension 4: Creating a Different Vision

Specifically, creating a different vision

means increased influence for persons of colour and aboriginal persons in decision-making and a redistribution of resources to peoples of colour and aboriginal peoples. In schools, these shifts would be seen in such areas as increased participation in decision-making by racial minority and aboriginal parents and students; increased resources for programs and services of direct benefit to children who are aboriginal or of colour; increased diversity in the voices and perspectives of curriculum writers and teachers; more knowledge and skills on the part of all children and adults to recognize and challenge injustices; employment and staffing processes which unapologetically name, target, and insist on producing more equal results; recognition processes which are less individualistic, and which acknowledge languages, leadership, and other skills required to build community; assessment and placement processes which result in the same proportion of children in different programs as exist in the population.

Emerging Questions

As social change educators challenging racism, we are developing different approaches and experimenting with different roles. What these are depends on our own social identities. From our position in the Doris Marshall Institute, we see the following as some of the questions that genuine anti-racist work must contend with. We challenge both ourselves and our readers with these questions:

- To add to the obvious question of "Who benefits from racism?" we ask: Who benefits from current efforts in anti-racism?
- Is anti-racist work ever about accommodation to existing institutional structures and practices or must it always be about transformation?
- Is anti-racism work only about equality? Does it have other goals?
- Whose responsibility is it to work for transformation? Where are the starting points?
- Is anti-racism *negative*? Is it only "against" oppression and not part of a different vision of society?
- In the histories of the struggles of people of colour, is anti-racism only a moment that will pass?

Anti-Racist Education in Classroom Practice

These approaches address racism as a phenomenon which has to do with the ways in which power has been used and continues to be used in institutions, like schools, to grant opportunities, rights, resources, and respect to people on the basis of skin colour.

Anti-Racist Education: Panacea or Palliative?

Enid Lee

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Tensions and contradictions are emerging as the struggle against racism finds a serious place on the agenda of Canadian schools. In some places the struggle is described as the battle between multiculturalism and anti-racism. At this point, the content and outcome of the struggle are more significant than the banner under which the struggle is being waged. Banners can be very misleading in this field, as will be demonstrated in this article. Below I will describe some scenarios of anti-racist education and then compare these with some more commonly used approaches which fail, I believe, to adequately address the racism that exists in schools and in society.

Vignette A

Two First Nations students in Manitoba demonstrate pride in their heritage and history after they and their classmates view and discuss the film *For Angela*. In the film, a First Nation's woman and her daughter are subjected to racist slurs, and the mother, with the assistance of the school principal, confronts the perpetrators...

Vignette B

A Grade 5 student of African descent in Ontario learns that the school board's racial harassment policy and procedures do work even when the complaint is against a teacher who is perceived as racist and that there are superintendents who will give students a hearing on matters like these...

Vignette C

Members of an Arab community in

Alberta are preparing a book which will help students and teachers unlearn some of the myths about this particular community. They will work with classroom teachers to ensure that the contents of the book are not limited to Multicultural Week but that they become part of the regular curriculum...

Vignette D

A multi-racial group of teachers in Quebec spend an in-service day working with James Bank's model for integrating ethnic content into the curriculum (Banks & McGee, 1989, p. 192). They want to move beyond the holidays and the festivals in their classes. They are interested in equipping their students with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in the kind of social action which takes up issues of power instead of perpetuating patterns of paternalism...

Social Basis of Racism and Issues of Power

The partial accounts provided in these four vignettes reflect some of the approaches being used by teachers and students, parents and communities in dealing with racism as it is manifested in schools and society. These approaches address racism as a phenomenon which has to do with the ways in which power has been used and continues to be used in institutions, like schools, to grant opportunities, rights, resources, and respect to people on the basis of skin colour. They also link racist attitudes to the concrete realities of inequality and to society's explanation of how that inequality has come about. Racism is not explained as something which stems "simply from either ignorance of facts or irrational attitudes and beliefs" (Simon, Brown, Lee, & Young, 1988, p. 6). Because racism is first and foremost a matter of effect not intent, these approaches focus on outcomes.

Self-Esteem Rooted in Material Reality

In Vignette A, the video discussed by the class contains an episode in which a young girl of the First Nations cuts her hair in order to avoid racist taunts. The teacher of one class in which the film had been viewed reported that after the discussion two of the First Nations students returned to school with their hair neatly braided, holding their heads proudly. Their transformation was so significant that the rest of their classmates applauded. The students shared the positive feelings they had derived from the discussion about the film. This episode took place in a school undertaking a whole-school approach to anti-racism.

In several classes of this school, teachers are consciously examining their expectations of academic achievement of First Nations students. The school has developed a three-year plan for creating an anti-racist environment throughout the school. An additional element is that the discussion about the Native community is mainstreamed so that First Nations students see their culture occupying a significant space in the curriculum. The literature reports that curriculum initiatives which mainstream the lived culture of marginalized groups help to enhance self-esteem of students from those groups. This is one instance where the main curriculum appears to have had a positive impact on students' sense of themselves. Often students of minority status are urged to think positively about their culture and their community during one multicultural week. But that is difficult when on all the monocultural weeks the school seems blissfully unaware of the presence of these students. Such was not the case in this instance...

Outcome Not Intent

In Vignette B, we see a Grade 5 student developing skills to use the policy in the school to gain equality. It must be noted that not all school boards have procedures for students to follow if they believe that a teacher has acted in a discriminatory way to them. The procedures for dealing with racism between student and student are well in place, but they are not always present or applied when the teacher's actions are deemed discriminatory. In this instance, we see a school board policy

which protects not only adults but also students. We observe a student who has been empowered by the principal with information on how the system ought to work. We encounter a superintendent who respects students sufficiently to take the time to meet them to hear their complaints and to appeal to the teacher's good intention. We see a teacher who wishes to change whatever behaviour is having a negative effect on the Black students in the schools. It is reported that the racist behaviour that the student had perceived upon the part of the teacher no longer occurs. From the student's perspective, she has learned how to fight racism by using the school policy.

Unlearning Stereotypes

In Vignette C, we note the effort of a community to challenge racist images through the infusion of information about themselves, in their own voices, by venturing to write a book. A significant factor is that the book is about Arabs as Canadians. Often, attempts to learn about "other cultures" mean learning about those cultures in other lands. One of the subtle messages conveyed by the approach taken by this community is that Canadians are of Arab background also. This addresses the question of who a Canadian is and speaks to the racism implied in the view that some Canadians are more Canadian than others. People of colour can be treated as immigrants forever even if they have been in Canada all of their lives.

Making Links

In Vignette D, one of the strategies explored by teachers seeking ways to expand their own and their students' understanding of racism leads them to discuss the impact of the portrayal of Africa as diseased, disorganized, dependent, and destructive on the perception of Africans in Canada. The teachers plan to explore with their students how media representation has an impact on their image of themselves and of their peers. The teachers recognize that it is important to anticipate students' responses and not to sacrifice the feelings and dignity of their African Canadian students in their classes for the sake of learning. Another idea generated in this workshop concerns the question of aid versus trade

with the so-called developing countries. Students are being encouraged to examine the interests served by Canada's foreign policy and to develop activities to influence that policy. Teachers in the workshop are moving towards an anti-racist stance for development education.

While none of the above activities are panaceas for racism, they do address issues of power and they are connected both with the material conditions of people's lives and with attitudes and feelings which may be related to social realities. I will now briefly examine some of the activities which are more commonly used by educators for addressing racism.

First Impressions

Since 1989, I have been encouraged by the effort of thousands of teachers and their students across this country who every year participate in the Together We Are Better competition to develop projects to stop racism in their schools and communities. The winning ideas among these projects are published by the Department of Canadian Heritage in a magazine entitled, *Winning Ideas To Stop Racism*.

Despite my support for the initiative, when I saw the Secondary Edition 1993 of *Winning Ideas To Stop Racism*, I felt compelled to take a second look and think again. On the cover are the words "Let's Kiss Racism Goodbye" framed by a number of red lips. Racism is a serious matter. The image of red lips ready for kissing seemed incongruous in this situation.

A Closer Look

A closer examination of *Winning Ideas To Stop Racism* revealed that of the twenty-one winning ideas selected from across the country eight came from British Columbia, six from Ontario, two from Manitoba, two from Alberta, two from Quebec, one from Nova Scotia, and one from Prince Edward Island. The selections were made by young people who, according to their own description, "have been working individually and in youth groups to stop racism and teach people how to understand each other" (TG Magazine, 1993, p.9.).

One of the striking and commendable features of this publication is its emphasis on process. Many details on "how to"

are provided — how to start a unity and diversity group or how to draft your school's declaration of rights and responsibilities (pp. 15 & 17.) Some of the projects include suggestions for forming clubs, using co-operative learning activities, expressing ideas through various art forms, and integrating these ideas into activities throughout the year. All of these suggestions are laced with enthusiasm, a sense of responsibility, and the need to do something about racism, as for example, the bold exhortation, "Don't ignore the problem" (pp. 8 & 9). These are important approaches to combatting racism but equally important is the content of the co-operative activities and these artistic expressions.

It is quite possible to create co-operative classrooms and still use material that is essentially racist. One can organize a unity and diversity club and deal with

The other part of this struggle is to remember to celebrate when we have helped to change the words "fairness" and "dignity" into experiences.

cultural holidays and host a Multicultural Week and yet not deal with racism. These events may present some information about cultural groups and focus on the exotic and leave many people with a nice feeling but do nothing to address the school's response or lack of response to the languages and faiths of students of colour. They may leave intact the Euro-centric curriculum which students consume daily.

It is this emphasis on form and pleasant feelings which may have led the judges to choose the "Let's Kiss Racism Goodbye" poster. They describe it as a striking and original idea, putting across a strong, direct message in a humorous way" (p. 7). I believe the intent of this poster is a good one but the effect may be different. It may trivialize the serious-

ness and pain of racism and it seems not to be directed towards the situations and school practices that must be changed if racism is to be challenged. I wish that racism could so easily and humorously be kissed goodbye as the poster suggests.

Causes of Racism and Solutions to Racism

Most projects in this publication suggest that racism is caused by fear and ignorance and hate (pp. 6 & 16). The solutions to the problem include the colour blind approach. The judges applaud one of the entries because it encourages us to "See the person, not the colour. The difference in our colour is a very small difference" (p. 10). The colour-blind approach can prevent us from seeing racism and fighting against it.

Several of the entries suggest that learning about other countries and cultures is a solution (pp. 14 & 19). On the one hand, expanding one's knowledge about others can be important in changing stereotypes. On the other hand, one can simply place old wine in new bottles and continue to see difference as fascinating, but none the less in deficit terms. In addition, learning about other countries may simply suggest that differences are connected with countries outside of Canada.

Addressing racism must include an examination of the way in which Canadians of different racial backgrounds have experienced their differences. This examination must be grounded in the history of racism in this country, both how it is maintained and how collectively and individually people here have challenged racism and continue to challenge it. The emphasis on history, unfortunately, does not seem to be present in the *Winning Ideas*.

One of the more subtle messages of the publication is that the struggle against racism should not be negative or confrontational. One of the judges poses the question, "How do we stand up and 'fight' against racism without falling into the contradiction of using violence and negativity to eliminate prejudice?" (p. 7). An equally important question for the judges to ask, in my view, is why we become uncomfortable by the assertive, self-determined actions on the part of those whose survival and dignity are challenged daily by the violence of

racism. That racism may be in the textbooks that refer only to them and their communities in the sidebars of the text. It may be in the form of news media which perpetually assault them with images of their communities as criminal or as the cause of all evils in Canadian society. Perhaps these expressions of racism need responses slightly more decisive than kisses and kind words. A palliative offers relief but one still remains ill.

It is important to note that the solutions in *Winning Ideas* do not come from thoughtless and uncaring young people. Rather, these solutions reflect the prevailing wisdom of how racism works. Racism is understood largely as attitudinal, individual, with little attention paid to its social basis, little attention to history and power or culture as lived. Much attention is paid, however, to making the subject palatable.

The recent publication entitled *Multicultural Education: The State of the Art National Study Report # 1* is instructive from many angles. The aspect that is being noted here is the emphasis in the research on multiculturalism which appears to be related to questions of attitude and the reduction of prejudice. Five of the ten research articles listed in that publication have the words "prejudice" and "attitude" in the title. I make this observation to say that the emphasis in the projects in *Winning Ideas* is not random or thoughtless. It reflects the more common emphasis in the research: attitude change, and not the emphasis on whole school, systemic change described in such case studies as that of Flemington Public School referenced in Cheng and Sondack (1994, pp. 10-12).

The student publication is a good example of what has been emphasized and embraced under the banner of multiculturalism. There are numerous reasons for this particular emphasis but there are several which are particularly significant.

First, the struggle against racism has become bureaucratized. In some instances the language of anti-racism has been adopted, co-opted, and controlled by officials. The work against racism has been reduced to a set of techniques, which successfully maintains the racial hierarchy reflected in such important matters as the control of resources and the setting of the agenda for what will be deemed legitimate anti-racist work (see Yeboah, 1988,

p. 13 for further discussion of the racial hierarchy).

Second, the struggle against racism has become commercialized (see Quamina, 1988, p. 4). As a person who is involved in anti-racist work, I speak openly of the challenge that must be faced as anti-racism becomes a "growth industry." The challenge is to address the reality and roots of racism in institutions which in turn have the power to determine one's livelihood. It is possible to do anti-racism work and never use the word "racism" or to make the topic so palatable that no urgency for action is felt.

Third, the struggle against racism has become generalized. The term "racism" is applied to a wide array of situations many of which are unrelated to discrimination based on skin colour. Precision is urgently needed in this discourse. We need to be specific as we discuss the differences and similarities in the ways in which different people of colour experience racism and as we examine the relationship between racism and anti-semitism and explore the connection between other forms of oppression such as sexism and classism.

These social and political facts are seldom examined in the struggle against racism in schools. We address attitudes without reference to power and privilege; yet we insist that we are stopping racism. Reality and rhetoric collide and much remains the same.

Lest I leave the impression that I do not think teachers and their students are able to grapple with issues of power and privilege, let me describe what in my own view is an excellent example of this from the 1990 *Together We Can Stop Racism*. One of the winning articles of that year was submitted by a 13-year-old White student from Pickering, Ontario. He says, "I wrote to the *Toronto Star* about how I felt about racial discrimination. During the week of March 21, I cut out all the pictures of people. Ninety-two percent of the people had white skin so I wrote to the *Star* telling them I wanted more pictures of Blacks and [Asians]" (p. 8). This student has understood the impact of images on maintaining racism. He is also prepared to use his power to bring it to the attention of others and, perhaps more importantly, he has understood, at the tender age of 13, that power, taking the form of image in this case, can be redistributed and that this would con-

tribute to fairness in society.

I hope that *Winning Ideas to Stop Racism* in future competitions will include tools which will help young people to analyze and act upon some of the patterns of unequal power which are at the root of racism. Researchers and teachers have a responsibility to help young people discover from history and from the present society that power is seldom willingly shared. We can demonstrate by our own activities that anti-racist work is a struggle, a serious though not necessarily a joyless one.

All of us, from all racial backgrounds, in all parts of this country have a stake in stopping racism in whatever form it takes in our schools and communities. Part of this struggle to stop racism must be the willingness to name and overcome the contradictions that often prevent us from reaching the goals of fairness and dignity for children of all races. The other part of this struggle is to remember to celebrate when we have helped to change the words "fairness" and "dignity" into daily experiences.

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"I don't want to talk about it"

Silencing Students in Today's Classrooms

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Darren, a ten-year-old African-Canadian male student, is one of four black students in his Grade 5 class of 30. Approximately six other students in the class are minorities of Asian, South Asian, Lebanese, Iraqi origin. Darren is a keen participant in sports. This makes him very popular with his male peers, thus accounting for the leadership he displays during games on the playground. When asked to name some people he admires, Darren names mainly athletes involved in professional sports.

Born in London, England, to Caribbean parents, Darren immigrated to Canada with his family (mother, father and four siblings), when he was three years old. He is one of three students in his class that are identified as needing withdrawal (i.e., out of classroom) support to bring them to "grade level." In class, Darren is very unlikely to ask for help in understanding assigned tasks, and often, if not monitored, will hand in incomplete class work. Darren is a reluctant participant in class activities. He does not participate in singing, or in aerobic exercises during the "quality daily physical education" activities, or in the oral repetition exercises in French class. His artwork shows little effort or creativity, and for silent reading periods, he often chooses to read comic books he brings from home or picture books which are usually about sports. The reason he gives for not participating in class activities is that "they are boring."

One of Darren's teachers reports that "Darren is a very difficult nut to crack. He also appears very set into a pattern of low achievement in his work; if this disturbs him, he doesn't let on. Darren's disengagement from school presents an enormous challenge to anyone charged with the task of designing school curriculum for him." Further, about Darren's

psychological state, the same teacher remarked: "What is immediately striking in talking to Darren is his emotional flatness. He will generally answer questions designed to elicit a personal response with such monosyllabic phrases as 'It's okay,' 'I dunno,' or 'Alright.' His awareness of the lives of his family members has an oddly vague, detached quality, and his disengagement from school life, with the exception of his life on the playground, seems depressingly absolute."

Every teacher in Darren's school is white, as is the principal, the secretary, the lunchroom supervisors, and even the man who puts on the "Scholastic Book Fair" presentations.

Every teacher in Darren's school is white, as is the principal, the secretary, the lunchroom supervisors, and even the man who puts on the "Scholastic Book Fair" presentations. When asked about race as a factor in Darren's participation in classes and his success, two of his teachers emphatically stated that "race is not a factor in Darren's performance."

The curricular materials to be found in Darren's classroom are textbooks that have been used since the 1960s and 70s. One of these, a reading comprehension book, presents "Canadian history" as a collision of white Europeans with "primitive native tribes" who do such things as "dance ceremoniously." Nowhere in this book, or in the social studies text, *They Went Exploring*, is the history of ethnic groups other than white Europeans acknowledged.

Within the first month of the fall semester, Darren's class saw a video as part of the "All About Me" unit. The video is part of the "Inside-Out" series, which is designed to address ethical issues and decisions confronting children. This particular video was about "racial intolerance." It showed a white boy who is confused as he encounters "strange" people of other cultures, and featured a conversation between the boy and his mother, who tells him: "Some people don't want black people living near us. They want to keep them in the slums." The picture cuts here from the mother's face to a grainy, black and white shot of black people in the slums — slumping against walls and doorways looking despondent. There was no discussion following the video, as it was time for recess when it ended, and the teacher did not plan to debrief when they returned. But as the students left the classroom, a friend of Darren's (who is white) was overheard asking him: "What do you think of that movie?" Darren replied in a rather curt manner: "I don't want to talk about it."

Later in the semester, Darren's class began a social studies unit on "Primitive People" which followed a four-week study of "Prehistoric People." The materials for this unit abounded with pictures of black-, brown-, and red-skinned people scantily clad and carrying their traditional technological implements. The social studies curriculum for the following semester showed that the next unit would be on "Medieval Times." Here the lessons presented European societies with kings, queens, nobles, and explorers, all of whom are white.

Why does Darren seem so uninterested in school or in learning? Are race and culture factors that might explain something about Darren's attitude towards learning and his performance in class? Could Darren's reluctance to participate in class activities be a way of coping with the school environment in general, and curricular materials in particular?

"I don't see difference": How Students Are Silenced

In a recent anti-racist education workshop, the facilitator asked whether it is appropriate that teachers recognize the racial composition of their classes.

Specifically, he asked if each of us could tell him the racial composition of our classes. One teacher quite confidently responded, "I don't think of my students in that way." Another said, "Colour for me is not important, they are all students; and it is important for me to see them in that way." Both these statements reflect how teachers approach the racial and ethnic diversity within their classrooms. It is also an indication of the limited extent to which teachers are comfortable in dealing with race and, by extension, difference.

But it is only when difference is acknowledged that teachers will be able to create a positive learning environment for students like Darren. Such an environment is one that presents positive images of learners and validates their experiences. It is one that recognizes the particular diversity of the student population in terms of, for example, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and provide the space for the inclusion of their experiences in the classroom discourses. Students must be seen as individuals who occupy a number of social worlds and are therefore members of multiple groups. With regard to ethnicity and racial group, it is understood that each group has its own history, its own achieved or imposed position within Canadian society. These are part of the basis for the students' orientation to education and their perceptions of their possibilities.

There are times when, in referring to difference, teachers have said, "They're all unique individuals, and I treat them that way." Individualism is acknowledged in terms of personal difference, while group membership is acknowledged insofar as it refers to a group of students. This is a contradiction, for if it is accepted that individuals' experiences are shaped by the fact that they are students, is it not also true that their experiences will similarly be shaped by their status as, for example, members of a racial minority? And as students differ from each other, but share the "student experience," so too racial minority students differ but have the minority experience.

If students do not have their individual and group experiences acknowledged and validated in terms of, among other things, their racial identities, then they

will feel invisible and insignificant and that their differences are irrelevant. There will be no space for their voices in the classroom discourse. This is likely to silence these students, and as a result, they might disengage from the educational process.

Returning to Darren, we have noticed that on the playground, he is a leader and

Once the concept of self-esteem is engaged, the issue is seen as a deficit within a particular individual rather than a problem of how her or his racial group has been represented or portrayed.

an active participant in recreational activities, in class he is "emotionally flat." While there are many factors that might help to explain this inconsistency, it is important to examine the classroom dynamics and his teacher's practices in particular. The teacher's role is crucial, for she or he has power over the students and this is reflected in choice and use of films, videos, posters, guest speakers, textbooks, and other classroom materials. While the video about racial tolerance might have been an attempt to acknowledge "diversity" and to have a lesson which would promote positive race relations, it failed to do so; it seemed to reinforce, like the social studies unit, stereotypes of Africans and other racial minorities. If such information and images are presented, then they must be accompanied by discussions that deal with issues such as stereotypes. In addition, there must be a balance between negative and positive information and images.

In not recognizing Darren's difference ("race is not a factor"), his teachers negate his life experiences, the history of his racial group in Canada, and the social and cultural world which he occupies. As

a result, Darren's experience, needs, and interests are not reflected in the class materials. If the images of blacks that Darren constantly encounters in classes are ones that present them as low achievers, "primitive," and "slum dwellers," and there are no discussions about these images, then this will operate to silence Darren. His experience is not acknowledged or validated; he is invisible; and moreover, he is powerless in challenging the teacher. No wonder then that Darren, like many other black students (James, 1990), finds his classes "boring" and refuses to ask questions which would help him with classroom tasks.

Confronted with these negative images of themselves, racial minority students like Darren are likely to develop low self-esteem (Phinney, 1989), which in turn is used to further justify the notion that race and culture are not factors to be considered. For once the concept of self-esteem is engaged, the issue is seen as a deficit within a particular individual rather than a problem of how her or his racial group has been represented or portrayed. In response, many of these students "choose not to learn" because they do not feel that their voices are accepted and valued. They choose to not learn "that which denies them their sense of who they are" (Delpit, 1993, p. 291).

Addressing the Silence

To address the situation of students like Darren requires teachers to be constantly and critically self-reflective. We must reflect on our socialization, our biography, our worldview, and on how these impact on our practices, the classroom materials we use, our pedagogical approach to teaching, our vision of what we wish for all of our students and how we might best meet their needs. We must reflect on how we decide on what to teach, what materials to use, and what the appropriate roles of students and parents are in helping to design curricula that would respond to their needs and interests. Also, as teachers we must acknowledge our own interests and needs. We need to think about what we are learning from our students; what we think the students are learning; and how we know this. In essence, this reflection helps us to become conscious of what we

bring to the classroom, both as socialized individuals and as professionals.

As part of their professional socialization, some teachers declare that they “do not see colour,” that it is unimportant in the teacher-student relationship. This colour-blindness is a denial of the psychological and cultural power of racial constructions upon the lives of every member of society. The sad part of this

To have an approach to teaching that is inclusive, teachers must constantly engage in a critical examination of their curricula and practices.

position is that these teachers believe that they are being neutral and that this neutrality absolves them of stereotyping and of being racist. But race and cultural difference must be acknowledged if we are to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment, in which all students feel validated and included. Only when teachers acknowledge race and racism will we be able to avoid inflicting hurt on students like Darren who only see images that undermine their self-esteem and have lessons that present little or no positive images of their ethnic and racial groups. In order for Darren and his peers to develop a healthy respect, appreciation, and acceptance of each other's differences, their curricular materials must help them to critically evaluate and interrogate the negative images that they encounter in their education and general socialization process.

It is important for teachers to help students learn about how individual and structural racism operate to affect everyone and about how they are experienced by both white and racial minority people. This is necessary so that students can develop strategies to confront these forms of racism in order to bring about social change. Teachers generally, and

— according to Christine Sleeter (1994) — whites in particular, must guard against the tendency “to discuss cultural differences” as a way of deflecting “attention away from racism” or talk about it “in ways that simplify and devalue others while rendering whiteness itself as invisible, or ‘normal’” (p. 6). As teachers, whether in a multiracial or racially homogeneous class, we must help students to critique white supremacy; and, as Sleeter suggests, white teachers must begin to engage in such critiques themselves.

Some Classroom Examples of an Anti-Racist Approach to Teaching

In an attempt to address the consequences of racism and stereotyping that resulted from the reading materials in his classroom, Andrew Allen, an elementary school teacher in the North York Board of Education, developed a different approach to his teaching. Mr. Allen had found that his Grade 2 students, particularly blacks, were uninterested in reading even the popular “multicultural” picture books with black characters. His students claimed that the images “did not look like them. They were ugly and African.” The images presented in the books were, in fact, stereotypical illustrations of African peoples. As a result, Mr. Allen decided to use the books to teach critically. He taught his students to recognize the bias in the literature; sometimes, before asking his students to react to the stories or the pictures, he would describe what he disliked about the books. The students would then proceed to either write their own stories or develop their own illustrations.

This idea of students' writing their own stories has also been successfully employed by Bob Davis in his OAC black history course at Stephen Leacock Collegiate in the Scarborough Board of Education. The results of the students' work are presented in their book, *Our Roots 2*, a significant symbol of their capacity to write and to produce historical accounts from their perspective. This is a recognition that the students are experts in their own lives — a perspective Lisa Delpit (1988) contends must be kept. No doubt students are inspired by this learning process because their voices are heard and are validated.

Another example of a teacher who responded to the needs and interests of her students is Mrs. Goodie Tshabalala-Mogadime with the York Region Board of Education. In her language arts class her students read *Underground To Canada*, and “A Woman Called Moses,” a story about Harriet Tubman. Mrs. Tshabalala-Mogadime reports that these stories, along with viewing the movie “Malcolm X,” helped one of her 13-year-old black students who was considered to have a learning problem “to critically analyse systemic racism and discrimination, as something that is not just school related.” She said that the student's self-concept and his belief in his abilities increased after he was exposed to information that was relevant to his experience and was presented examples of the capacity of his group members to succeed. Mrs. Tshabalala-Mogadime also involved the parents and members of the community in her classes by inviting them in as guest speakers.

Teachers are not neutral, neither is the pedagogical approach we employ. We must acknowledge the biases that are inherent in our approaches to our subject matter. This realization came through in an experience I had in a workshop where the facilitator, wishing to present an “anti-racist approach” to teachers, presented a role play of one that is appropriate. After everyone was given their respective roles, it was evident that the racial minorities in the group were not participating. When they explicitly raised their difficulties with the role play, the facilitator, rather than using this as an opportunity to discuss the difficulties and pursue other ways in which the lesson could be presented, became defensive and reported that on all the other occasions in which he has used this role play, “students have quite liked it, even the black students.” This facilitator, who is also a teacher, is operating on the premise that “what applies to one, applies to all.” He did not pay attention to the diversity to be found within all groups. To him, the problem was not himself, or his method; it was the “attitude” of the racial minority participants. Instead of working with the participants to develop an approach that would serve the whole group, he stuck to his original plan. Needless to say, very little was accomplished that day.

Towards the Future: Provide Space, Validate Voices

As teachers, we must see ourselves and the students as learners and teachers together, all engaged in a dialogical educational process. We must take into consideration the power dynamics of the classroom and society in general, noting how everyone is affected by the cultural, social, economic, and political structures of the larger society. We must recognize the impact of systemic racism and sexism on the lives of the students and must provide them with the tools to analyze their situation and construct strategies which will enable them to realize their educational and occupational goals.

To have an approach to teaching that is inclusive, teachers must constantly engage in a critical examination of their curricula and practices. In order to be responsive to the changing needs and interests of the students, we must be flexible, responsive, and willing to engage students as well as fellow teachers in building a non-racist curriculum. Social change must be seen as the hallmark of an educational process where students gain critical awareness and insights into themselves and the social forces that influence their lives. The teacher is a facilitator of this process, someone who affirms and validates the cultural experiences and identities of all students so that their voices come alive, are heard and not silenced.

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Like Flies in the Buttermilk

Afrocentric Students in the Multicultural Classroom

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You Would Think African-Canadians Would be Thrilled With Black History

The resurgence of various forms of black philosophy and politics in North America — from the Black Muslim faith to hip-hop culture to Afrocentrism — is having a significant impact on North American culture and institutions. In the case of education, we have seen a proliferation of Afrocentric and black-focus schools as well as Black Studies programs at universities. In addition, various forms of African pedagogy are being articulated, including black emancipatory pedagogy (King, 1987), African liberatory pedagogy (Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990) and African-centred pedagogy (Lee, Lomotey, & Shujaa, 1990). There is growing support for the establishment of more black-focus schools to address such issues as racism faced by African-Canadian students in Canadian school systems, the promotion of black pride, and teaching of black history and culture. As an African educator, I believe that while the argument for a network of black-focus schools in Canada is seductive, it raises several spectres including marginalization of black youth and the black population in general, the resurgence of androcentric education (it is black males who are most often perceived to be "at risk" and for whom such programs are primarily designed), and the unwitting buttressing of arguments to maintain the status quo of exclusion or marginalization of black history, culture, and perspectives in Canada's educational systems (you can get that in black schools

so why duplicate it in all schools?). In my view, educational separation is not the solution. The changes need to be made within the existing education systems where they can benefit not only black students but all Canadians. The solution to the dual problem of racism against blacks and the inclusion of black perspectives, cultures, and history in education is the construction and application of a combination of anti-racist and progressive black consciousness approaches.

In this essay, I undertake an examination of a recent issue of *Perspectives* (an American history newsletter) which I hope will be relevant to educators interested in an analysis of the politics of race in education generally and those interested in utilizing an anti-racist and/or Afrocentric approach to pedagogy in their classrooms specifically.

The issue of *Perspectives* contains a lead article titled "White Professors, Black History: Forays into the Multicultural Classroom," and several responses to it. The author of the lead article, V Nobile (1993), describes himself as a progressive white historian who teaches African-American history, and his principal statement is that it has become virtually impossible for him to teach black history because he has encountered an unprecedented intransigence and distrust in black students, a standpoint fuelled, he believes, by a brand of Afrocentrism which leads black students to question everything from the course content to his pedagogy to his role as teacher of such a course. This situation has now become intolerable and has led him to take a hiatus from teaching African-American history.

The situation described by Nobile is hardly an isolated case. Although most of the cases published thus far have occurred in the United States and at the

university level, the resurgence of black consciousness is a North America-wide phenomenon, and Canadian teachers at university, secondary, and even primary levels are or soon will be faced with similar situations. In fact, white teacher candidates I have taught at York University have reported feeling completely paralysed by accusations of racism (whether in terms of personal prejudice or biases in the curriculum) levelled by black primary school children.

Are You Saying Only Black People Can Teach Black History?

Nobile starts off by asking two interesting questions, namely, "Can whites teach African American history?" and "Should whites teach African-American history?" He answers the first question by asserting that with the right preparation and content knowledge, anyone can teach anything. In response, Molefi Kere Asante, a principal proponent of Afrocentrism, underscores Nobile's point by stating explicitly that "given the proper orientation, mastery of facts, basic pedagogical skills, and a willingness to learn from gifted students, any teacher ought to be able to teach any subject" (p. 19).

This statement might appear hardly worth quoting except that it contradicts an apparently widespread perception about Afrocentrism: namely that Afrocentrists hold that only Africans (broadly defined) can teach about and learn about Africa(ns). Asante and other Afrocentrists like George Dei (e.g., Dei, 1994) reject an exclusively black Afrocentrism, and this leads me to wonder whether the persistence of this notion does not in fact reflect a lack of knowledge about the discourse or part of a ready-made case to dismiss it. This more inclusive, progressive discourse of Afrocentrism advocated by Asante, Dei, and others in fact presents a challenge to both the reticent non-black educator and the black non-Afrocentrist educator to investigate and perhaps utilize Afrocentric philosophy and pedagogy.

The responses to the second question, "Should whites teach African-American history?" are even more interesting. Nobile characterizes himself as a white professor who is sensitive to racism, is politically progressive, and has acquired a thorough knowledge of African-American history. Yet, he is aware that these

factors address his qualifications to teach the subject rather than whether it is, in his words, "politically correct" for him to be teaching the subject. While Nobile attempts to explore this issue as a serious ethical and political question, another contributor, Leon F. Litwack declares that "it would never occur to me to explain in the first lecture why as a white scholar I was teaching [African American history]" (pp. 13-14). Asante asserts that white professors can and should teach African American history provided they are "willing to make the necessary commitment to teach accurately and Afrocentrically" (p. 19).

The three responses reflect differing positions on the question of whether knowledge can be neutral and whether the teacher can be a neutral conduit capable of objectively transmitting "just the facts." Asante's statement, especially his linking of teaching accurately and teaching Afrocentrically, raises questions about the relationship between emerging Afrocentric pedagogy and existing "mainstream" (Eurocentric) pedagogy. Does Asante mean to suggest that unless one teaches Afrocentrically, one is teaching inaccurately? What does it mean to teach accurately? What does it mean to teach Afrocentrically? If the only valid and accurate way to teach African-American history is to teach it Afrocentrically, then the only valid and accurate way to teach European-American history is to teach it Eurocentrically. On what basis, utilizing which worldview, do we then incorporate African-American history into "mainstream" American history (or African-Canadian history into mainstream Canadian history) as Asante recommends?

The White Teacher as the New Missionary

Nobile appears to be ambivalent about the issue of race in his classroom. On the one hand, he is sensitive enough to the politics of race to seriously address the issue of whether or not as a white professor he should be teaching African-American history. On the other hand, he is genuinely puzzled and disappointed that his new crop of black students come to his class with a preconceived distrust of him. Nobile's bewilderment is at best naive. Although he draws attention to the politics of race by attempting to justify

why as a white man he is teaching a course in African-American history, he expects to be treated as a neutral conduit of knowledge or even as an ally in the struggle to move black people/cultures from margin to centre. By deciding to teach African-American history (an historically missing aspect of American history and even now a marginalized sub-text), he appears to acknowledge that knowledge production is political. Yet he expects his students not to ques-

Contemporary progressive western academics now come armed with a willingness to learn about and teach about the Other, intent on empowering the marginalized.

tion the race and, more significantly, the perspective and politics of the authors and texts he puts on his course. He appears to want to acknowledge the politics of race yet place himself and his course content outside of it.

I describe this stance as the politics of the new missionary. By this I mean the expectation that a declaration of neutrality or empathy should be enough to allow one into the trust of the oppressed Other. For the most part, European missionaries who went to places like Africa were genuinely interested in saving the souls of the natives and often opposed the armies and administrators of colonizing powers. Yet they ended up (if only by disarming the natives through the appeal of Christianity and literacy in European languages) participating in colonialism and attempted cultural genocide. Contemporary progressive western academics now come armed with a willingness to learn about and teach about the Other, intent on empowering the marginalized. Yet for many marginalized people, they appear to be nothing but a new set of missionaries.

Yes, It Is a Dissin', and No, There Ain't Nothin' Personal 'Bout It

Nobile does not consider himself a victim and he refuses to blame his students directly for the failure of his class, pointing out that "while the incidents have made me rethink my decision to teach African American history, I do not see myself as a victim of political correctness or the 'thought police' and I do not wish to be seen as such" (p. 11). However, he leaves the discussion at the level of his classroom and points to the discourse of radical Afrocentrism which the students subscribe to as the culprit. Because he does not take up the larger historical, institutional, and social issues involved, Nobile leaves open the possibility that his refusal to blame his students is simply politeness. But we must venture beyond how Nobile was affected by this situation as an individual if we wish to unearth the wider institutional and social issues raised by the incident.

In her response to Nobile, Brenda Stevenson undertakes an analysis which introduces a historical, political, and institutional context within which the pedagogical situation could be perceived. By introducing a wider context, Stevenson makes it possible to see that what the students reject is not Nobile the individual but what he represents. The fact that they come to the course already suspicious of the professor indicates that this is not about the professor as an individual but about a Eurocentric knowledge tradition that has actively marginalized and denied the humanity of Africans (broadly defined). What predisposes them to be suspicious is a historical legacy and ongoing problem of marginalization of blacks in school and university curriculums. The issue of a politics of race is central, but Stevenson makes it possible for us to see the students' position as one that probably reflects not a narrow, knee-jerk Afrocentrism but a concern for representation (both in terms of how blacks are represented in courses and whether or not they are represented on faculty). The failure of the introduction of an African-American co-teacher for the course to mollify the students underscores Stevenson's point that they have a deeper concern for a course in African-American history to reflect an African-American perspective than the

simplistic demand that such a course be taught by a black professor.

Educators Beware What You Wish For — Your Wishes May Come True

Ironically, the students who contribute to the breakdown of Nobile's class exhibit characteristics that would qualify them as the ideal of the critical pedagogue. They come with a comprehensive and coherent worldview and politics. They are sensitive to the politics of difference and insist on taking what Roger Simon (in press) has described as a position of alterity as opposed to a position of otherness around African-American history. They come with a firm belief in Paulo Freire's (1968, 1987) assertions that the pedagogical situation is always political and the teacher is never neutral. Consequently, they do not take the pedagogical situation for granted but are willing and able to undertake what Henry Giroux (1985) describes as a "critical literacy" in interrogating the perspective and poli-

The ambivalence of African-Canadians to Canadian educational systems is a black thing all teachers should understand.

tics reflected in the course readings. They come with an acquired knowledge of the explicit and implicit rules of power Lisa Delpit (1988) points to as being in operation in the pedagogical situation, and by being so vocal are actively engaged in transforming what Delpit describes as "the silenced dialogue" into a contentious debate. Finally, educators of every political persuasion would be heartened by the fact that they actually read all the texts on the course even before the first class. Thus their Afrocentrism appears to have engendered in these students many of the skills and strategies critical theorists and teachers

aim to foster. Perhaps all of this constitutes another strong argument for examining the productive radical potential that exists in Afrocentrism.

On the other hand, few critical educators would endorse the narrow, exclusivist, and prescriptive stance these students reportedly take. According to Nobile, they fail to engage him and other students in meaningful dialogue and yet they insist non-Afrocentrists cannot understand let alone participate in the Afrocentric discourse they attempt to impose on the course. The collapse of the course could hardly be considered a victory for either side.

It's a Black Thing All Teachers Should Understand

While many would point to measures such as the emergence of black history courses and the sensitivity of teachers to cultural differences and issues of race as solutions to the problems of racism against African-Canadian students and the marginalization of African-Canadian histories, cultures, and perspectives in education generally, the example of Nobile's case reveals that these developments are in fact only a start. Because of the under-representation of African-Canadians in the teaching profession, and the continued perception of knowledge as neutral, courses in black studies and African-Canadian history are mostly taught by white teachers. For many black students, teachers, and parents this situation highlights such problems as the lack of black role models in education, the persistence of patronizing and Eurocentric knowledge and ways of knowing, and the possible appropriation of African histories into Eurocentric knowledge. In fact the ambivalence of African-Canadians to Canadian educational systems is a black thing all teachers should understand.

There are no magic solutions to this complex situation. Recruiting and retaining African-Canadian educators who specialize in African subjects is a start. However, it would be counter-productive to suggest that black studies programs be put on hold until sufficient African-Canadian educators are available or that black studies be considered the exclusive domain of African-Canadian educators. Perhaps what needs to happen is for the persistent myths of neutrality (e.g., the

neutral teacher, the neutral curriculum, the neutral class of students) to be put to rest and social difference to be taken up seriously in the pedagogical situation as critical, feminist, and Afrocentric educators have advocated.

Leaving the myth of neutrality behind opens up the possibility for non-Afrocentrists to seriously engage rather than continue to caricature, demonize, and dismiss Afrocentric discourse and pedagogy. These reactions appear woefully inadequate in the face of the increasing number of young people who are turning to Afrocentrism as an academic and/or personal philosophy. Is it not elitist and a shirking of our responsibility as progressive educators (whatever our racial identity) if we refuse to adhere to the critical pedagogy maxim to "start where the students are" if

our black students increasingly declare that they are Afrocentric?

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Understanding the World of the Black Child

The Need for an Inclusive Curriculum

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The education provided for black youth continues to fail to meet goals of adequacy, let alone excellence. Historically, blacks were excluded from the classroom or streaming placed them in the lowest achieving programs of schools. And we still find teachers today who have low expectations for black children. Black youths are encouraged to equate race and colour with failure.

Students in the lower streams hold intensely negative views of themselves, both academically and generally. Class- and culture-biased tests further ensure the over-representation of black youths in the lower streams.

George Radwanski observed:

While only 12% of students in the highest or advanced stream leave school before graduation, the dropout rate is 62% among students taking mainly general level courses and 79% among students at the basic level. (1987, p. 76)

More than 20 percent of black students are registered in the basic level courses in Toronto compared to 14.2 percent of all white students. Within the Toronto Board of Education, only 36 percent of black students are enrolled in courses which allow for entrance to university (Tator, 1987, p. 9). The curriculum fails to challenge the history, vision, and expectations of the more privileged Anglo cultures, which in turn reinforces the devastating effects of racial oppression on black children and their cultures. This effect is increased when schools deny the impact of racism on the atti-

tudes and behaviour of students and teachers.

In this article I will make some comments about understanding the world of the black child and then relate these to the literature program for pre-school and primary children.

The Black Child/Black Family

Most teachers have a very limited understanding of the development of the black child and how this development is related to the literature program. This failure is in part explained by the fact that the literature used in teacher-training programs tends to support a pathological view of the black child and the black family. The latter is often interpreted as an improvised version of the North American middle-class white family.

Implicit in the concept of cultural deprivation has been the assumption that the standards of the dominant white middle-class culture represent norms by which all other cultures may be appropriately measured. Deviations from this ethnocentric norm are viewed as deprivations. It is taken for granted that cultural departures from the middle-class model mean cultural deficits rather than signifying a complex dynamics of social difference, be it in language, or behaviour style, appropriate to the child's environment. Closeness to this

model guarantees a minimal deficit; the further one finds oneself from this model, the larger one's deficit.

Basic to the teacher's capacity to plan a responsible literature program, and to acquire knowledge of the selection criteria which should govern choice of books, is an understanding of the black child's world and the cultural base from which he or she is operating. Recognition of how literature can function in relationship to that world must also be developed.

Conceptually, the world of black children and their families should be approached or examined from a systems perspective. In this framework, the family is viewed as a subsystem of the larger society. Approaching the black family in this manner allows us to include the interactions that occur between black people and the systems inside and outside their community. We can then examine the impact which the larger systems of government, education, social welfare, criminal justice, and so on have on the black family and the systems that have been developed within the black communities in response to these larger systems.

Abundant evidence exists suggesting that most institutions have not been supportive of black families. For black Canadians, racism has been an enduring phenomenon that shifts and changes with legislation, the state of the economy and the political climate, but there remains little indication of a decline of its significance in those major institutions that influence the development of human potential.

Black people have adapted to their secondary citizenship status in a variety of ways and have developed their own unique life-supporting culture in the absence of sufficient larger society supports. It is important to recognize that many of the cultural forms observed in the black community are rooted in the African value system and its reaction to the cultural imperatives of the wider Anglo-American society. One of the most creative cultural forms observed in the black community is the development of extended kin relations to support individual and group needs through the sharing of households, food, money, child care, emotional support, marriage advice, and shelter. The family network concept expands in the black community to

include others who are not related by blood or marriage but warmly referred to as "play brother or sister," "cousin," "blood," "home-boy/girl," "uncle," "aunt" "Grandparents," and so on. Wilhelmina Manns (1981), in a study which contrasted the role of "significant others" in the lives of white and black people, reported that extended family relationships remained more critical and for a longer span of time in the lives of black people when compared to whites. These relationships might in particular account for research which suggests that black children tend to be "more feelingful" and people-oriented than white children (Young, 1970).

It is taken for granted that cultural departures from the middle-class model mean cultural deficits rather than signifying a complex dynamics of social difference.

Larger societal institutions are continuing to erode many of the adaptive patterns evolved by black people, all of which have served to protect and nurture the black child. Mass media have helped to "despirit" Black children. Music has emphasized physical satisfaction over values and commitments, movies have displayed negative black role models, and television fails to realistically portray the problems of black communities.

Evidence of the impact of these systems can be seen in statistical data which alarmingly indicate that once a black child enters public school she or he is twice as likely as a white child to be held back a grade, and three times as likely to be placed in classes for the "mentally handicapped." It should be no surprise, therefore, that in any year, for every two black students who graduate from high school, one drops out (Edelman, 1981).

Black children live in a society which represses their own rich culture and history, and at best makes it difficult for them to develop positive self-concepts/esteem and to acquire the kinds of skills which will enable them to participate in North American society. In essence, black children live in two concentric circles of segregation; one imprisons them on the basis of their colour, while the other confines them within a culture of poverty.

Literature and Selection Criteria

The teacher's choice of curriculum and how this literature is utilized in the classroom can either negate or contribute to a black child's growing sense of competence, self-determination, personal worth, and self-esteem. As Tony Johnstone writes in "The Life of Thoughts":

If curriculum is understood also to mean organized instructional activities in the schools intended to facilitate learning, and if the reason for stimulating Black identity is to help the Black learner through education to achieve self-determination or self sufficiency, then the main question under discussion would seem to be: How can teachers instruct Black students in our schools so that Black students would most likely become self-sufficient"? (1990, p. 207)

Teachers must become aware of the types of literature they put to use in the classroom as well as how literature functions in our society. Some teachers select literature on the basis of content or didactic possibilities, or because of availability, colour illustrations, and simple vocabulary. Other teachers select books which are deemed "canonical" — fairy tales such as *Snow White*, Dr. Seuss, and others. But indiscriminate selection of books for young black children can have tremendous consequences, since most children's books present a world in which all the characters, or at least the main protagonists, are white. The message such books carry for black children is that blacks don't really matter. Conversely, white children are imbued with an implicit sense of superiority from their earliest encounters with the world of literature.

Literature, as it is "experienced" by readers, can be responsible for the formation of perceptions of self, family, culture, politics, and community. This

psychological dimension of literature can be of the greatest value for black children when the stories taught foreground social relationships and experiences otherwise disrespected by mainstream culture.

Teachers need, then, to become more critical of the reading material they use and attempt to begin literature instruction where the children situationally find themselves. They need to make every effort to foster the kind of learning climate which permits and encourages black children to achieve a high level of competence and self-determination without forcing them to become "raceless" and to reject their ethnic identity as well as their unique qualities of being black. Literature must achieve the following essential goals if it is to be of value for black children:

- Affirm the child's link with his or her African past and present.
- Convey realism and use various forms of English in correct cultural regional forms.

- Portray strong positive role models.
- Affirm black values and cultural patterns.
- Express the rhythm that characterizes black linguistic patterns; this must also include the black historical and present-day oral incantation.
- Be free from incorrect information, denigrating portrayals of persons, and caricatured stereotypes.
- Demonstrate the construction of race and racism as issues/factors necessary for understanding, but always as obstacles that must be overcome.

Through reading programs which use black students as educators and involve the black community, as well as discussions which lead to more objective information on the black child's world, we may begin to have more success in developing a responsible and relevant literature program.

The following selections of books and "identity toys" are examples of works which meet these criteria. They are all

available from the Third World Bookstore in Toronto: phone (416) 537-8039; Fax (416) 537-9783.

Myth, Realism and the West African Writer, Priebe

This text dispels some of the myths about Africa and African people. In addition it deals with issues of history, identity, and culture from an African perspective. The author forges an agenda, which seeks to affirm the African child's link with positive aspects of Africa and its people.

African Dream, Eloise Greenfield

This text brings forward the real, deep, vivid imaginations of children from the land of their ancestors. It illustrates Africa throughout with photos and narration.

Moja Means One, Muriel Feelings

This book counts from one to ten in Swahili. It gives the spelling in Swahili of each number, the number of objects or people to be counted, and has an illustration on each page.

In addition, the games listed below portray strong, positive black role models and deal with issues of power, knowledge, identity, culture, and history. Black youths and adults can have fun while gaining political consciousness:

The Black Explorers (Ages 8-12)

Identity Game (Ages 5-Adult)

Identity Card Game (Ages 4-up)

Legacy Puzzle

Map of Africa (Ages 10-Adult)

The X Game (Ages 10-Adult)

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Indigenous Knowledge and Anti-Racist Education

Reaching Out to People and Cultures

José Zaraté

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In his writings, John Mohawk, Seneca Scholar from the State University of New York at Buffalo, has given voice to indigenous peoples' experience of eurocentrism and abuse of power at the heart of racism. This abuse includes "justifying stolen land," a "model of planned inequality," and the "rationalization for

currently known to us. It takes a lot of courage to reach out to people and cultures that we are not familiar with. Our lack of discussion and dialogue with each other is a denial that a problem exists. Yet we all know that racism is bad and, therefore, do not want to be associated with it. School systems and the media can do much to expose the myth of white superiority and, in its place, can embrace the truth of interdependence among all races and cultures. And while we strive for unity, that doesn't imply we also desire uniformity. Within a sense of unity, we can still celebrate diversity.

The Need for Multicultural/ Anti-Racist Education Policies

Most European-Canadian youngsters grow up knowing and experiencing but one lifestyle, that of the dominant culture. They are taught that theirs is the best way of life and they expect that all others will accommodate it. On the other hand, most ethnic children grow up experiencing two worlds. They are taught the social values and customs of their ancestors, while also learning the ways of the dominant society. In this sense theirs is a richer and broader view of humanity.

It is exactly this richness of experience and broadening of the mind that can be given to all students. Yet it should not be thought that multicultural education is needed solely by the European-Canadian student. Ethnic children also need to expand their cultural knowledge. Native youngsters, for example, need time to learn more about their own ancestors and they need factual, positive information about African-Canadian, Hispanic, and Asian-Pacific students. Multicultural education should, thus, be geared to everyone and benefit everyone.

Policies are a reflection of the community developing them. And policies need to change, just as individuals and communities do. Ideally, school policies should reflect all dimensions of students' lives, but most do not.

We humans are multidimensional beings. We are mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual beings. Yet most school policies deal only with students' mental and physical aspects. We have policies that indicate the number of academic courses required of students, and that focus on similar academic/mental requirements. And we have policies that speak to the amount of physical education required of students. But our policies are lacking when it comes to addressing the emotional and spiritual

Our policies are lacking when it comes to addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of students and staff.

While we strive for unity, that doesn't imply we also desire uniformity.

continuing to disenfranchise minority groups ... upheld by a Eurocentric curriculum." He says, "A Eurocentric grid has been placed over society and everything is viewed from this perspective."

How and where did the negative portrayal of Natives begin? The earliest anti-Native public relations campaign began when the government — attempting to justify its usurpation of millions of acres of Native lands — depicted Indian people as untrustworthy, uncivilized, and unworthy.

But why does this negative portrayal continue? Primarily because we do not know each other. Life is safe if we do not have to go outside the bounds of what is

needs of students and staff.

By emotional needs, we are referring to students' feelings of self-worth and their sense of belonging. What policies exist to detail the importance of that aspect or to describe sample activities that should be engaged in at a minimum to engender positive feelings of self-worth? Does your school have a policy for establishing student support groups where sharing from the heart takes place in an atmosphere of support and acceptance?

By spiritual needs, we are not referring to religion but rather to the need for discussion of ethics and morals, and teaching students the skill of making wise choices. Does your current school policy address these issues in any way.

Schools should offer the appropriate environment for normal development and learning of our children and they should work collectively with the community to eradicate racism. The vicious assault

against three high school students last year in Hamilton was a vivid and highly publicized reminder of the persistence of racism in our schools. A year earlier this same school was the focus of attention when some students openly expressed to the press their neo-Nazi views and their participation in a white supremacist club at the school. Likewise, it is very disturbing to know that racism is not taken as seriously as it should be by some students and school administrations. The characterization of a recent anti-racism rally by the principal of a local high school as "a media event" trivialized the rally and the serious incident that provoked it. Similarly, statements such as the one made by a student regarding the racial tension at his school, "It is not as bad as they say. There is some graffiti inside the washrooms but that's all" indicate that there is not a firm and widely shared commitment to eradicate racism in the school.

I would like to include below some suggestions for Ontario school boards as they develop their multicultural/anti-racist policies.

1. Academic Content and the School Environment

Academic content should be paramount. Policy writers must stress the students' need for a cohesive and inclusive curriculum which responds to diversity, especially citing the need for knowledge of an accurate history of Indigenous people and people of the world. Contributions should be covered as well as information about their contemporary status. The curriculum must also be relevant, unbiased, and integrated into all subjects. Updated and accurate instructional materials and library resources should also be included in such policies. In addition, assemblies, extracurricular activities, and holidays and observances of different groups should be mentioned.

2. Respect of Students' Cultural Background

Educators must recognize, understand, respect, and/or appreciate diversity in their student and staff populations. Curriculum should respect the need for students to understand the effects of culture on self-image and aspirations. This will contribute to the need for students to become effective, constructive citizens. Such multicultural and/or anti-racist

policies should state the need for students to understand the concept of cultural pluralism and, importantly, to identify and challenge stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. The need for

The best policy can be defeated if it does not include language about enforcement of the policy.

diverse teaching and counselling techniques should also be addressed. The goal is stated as equitable outcomes for all. Yet it is important for us to recognize the difference between offering equal opportunities to students and working towards equal outcomes.

3. Staffing

There must be a commitment to recruiting and maintaining a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual staff. And these staff should be found in all levels: administration, supervision, teaching, and counselling. Policies must include the involvement of the community in their school recruitment and retention activities.

4. Staff Development

Ongoing teacher training has to be seen as essential. Policy writers must include staff development that is multicultural, systematic, comprehensive, ongoing, and for all staff, not just teachers. Policies should allow opportunities for staff to explore attitudes toward themselves and others. Perhaps schools could work with local universities to encourage them to include more multicultural components in their preservice program.

5. Involvement of the Community

Policies must address the need for advice from representatives of various ethnic groups. This would facilitate parents in participating as equal partners. Commitments should be made about including

community representatives on the full range of boards, committees, and task forces.

6. Enforcement

The best policy can be defeated if it does not include language about enforcement of the policy. One needs to be sure that an enforcement mechanism is built into the policy.

Educational Realities for Aboriginal Peoples

According to a 1993 study prepared for the Assembly of First Nations, federal government spending on Aboriginal education over the last ten years has increased by only 3 percent when inflation and population growth are taken into account. The study found that while spending on income maintenance has increased by 34 percent, spending on economic development and housing capital, both related to education, jobs, and training, has decreased by 66 percent.

Too many Aboriginal children are dropping out before graduating from high school. Only 41 percent of Indian children in Canada finished Grade 12, as at 1990. The success rate in the N.W.T., according to testimony before the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, is as low as 34 percent. Many causes for the drop-out rate are poverty-related, such as the cost of clothing, serious overcrowding at home, or poor health. Moreover, many children from northern and rural Aboriginal communities must still leave home to attend high school, where for the first time they become a minority among non-Native Students. In most instances, the education system is neither responsive to their needs nor relevant to the culture of Aboriginal peoples.

It is up to educators to become partners with Indigenous peoples. There are high expectations in the new generation of teachers and thinkers, whose cultural awareness would contribute to changing today's structured inequalities permeated by institutions including educational ones. And it is up to us, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, to offer guidance/advice to those who want to learn from us. Our commitment is not only to continue to challenge and press harder against Eurocentrism as a framework but also to share our knowledge.

Islamic Identity and Racism

Muslim Students and Ontario Education

Goli Rezai-Rashti

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Recent events in the Islamic world — the Iranian Revolution, the Gulf War, and the controversy over Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* — and the Western media's distorted coverage of these events have reinforced an image of Muslim peoples as barbaric and irrational terrorists. Yet the "Islam" that is vilified in the West bears almost no relation to the enormously varied life that goes on within the world of Islam, with its more than 800 millions square miles of territory, principally in Africa and Asia, and its dozens of societies, states, histories, geographies, and cultures. This kind of misrepresentation has increasingly important implications for Canadian education since the number of Muslim students is on the rise as a result of recent immigration and refugee policies.

In my work as a practitioner in the field of anti-racist education and also as a university instructor, I have had many opportunities to observe the kind of day-to-day racism that Muslim students encounter in the school and university environment. This article is based on these experiences.

Anti-racism and Islam

Recent studies in anti-racist education, especially in Britain, are becoming critical of the way in which racism has come to be seen almost exclusively as a black/white issue. This focus, it is argued, excludes people who are also the target of exclusionary practices because of their ethnicities, cultures, and religious practices.

The dichotomous categories of blacks as victims and whites as perpetrators of racism tend to homogenize the objects of racism, without paying attention to the different experiences of men and women of different social classes and ethnicities. They fail to note racism towards Jews, the Irish, third world workers, refugees and so on. (Anthias, 1992, p. 15)

One of the main signifiers of Western stereotypes of Islamic societies is the Islamic religion's alleged repressive treatment of women. Muslim women are perceived as subjugated, veiled, secluded and in need of being rescued.

This stereotype has a long history. It began in the late 19th century when

I am always amazed by the number of stereotypes that students bring to the classroom.

Europeans established themselves as colonial powers in Muslim societies. During this period, the issue of Islamic women wearing the veil was of considerable interest to the Western colonialists. The colonial discourse regarded the veil as a symbol of backwardness and considered veiling as the most visible sign of the inferiority of Islamic societies. As Leila Ahmed (1992) has outlined, the Victorian colonial paternalistic establishment used the language of feminism to further its assault on the religions and cultures of others, and in particular on Islam. According to colonialists, only if practices "intrinsic" to Islam were cast off could Muslim societies begin to move forward on the path to civilization.

The veiling became the target of colonial attack and the spearhead of assaults on Muslim societies (Ahmed, p. 152).

My own experience working in both the public school system and in the university has provided me with opportunities to see how gender issues in Islam are the target of severe criticisms and grave misunderstandings in Ontario society. In dealing with teachers, students, and administrators, I find their interactions with Muslim students to be based largely on stereotypes of Muslims that are reminiscent of the long-gone colonial era. For example, Muslim girls who wear the veil are considered automatically passive and oppressed. Guidance counsellors dealing with Muslim girls take their stories about their repressive parents at face value without even bothering to corroborate the students' claims with the parents themselves.

These are expressions of the erroneous understanding of Islam which assumes the inferiority of Muslim culture vis-a-vis western culture. For example, I attended a meeting at a high school where the discussion turned to whom to invite as guest speakers. The vice-principal, without giving a thought to what she was about to say, immediately suggested the name of an East African woman, claiming that she was an excellent speaker because "she is so modern and westernized."

In my "Women in Islamic Societies" course, I am always amazed by the number of stereotypes that students bring to the classroom. It takes usually several class periods to deconstruct and decode most of those stereotypes. The images of Muslim women presented by the students in the class are those of backward, oppressed, secluded, and battered victims. By decoding the stereotypes, I do not intend to give the message that women in Islamic societies are not oppressed. What I oppose is the Eurocentric attitude that Muslim women should abandon their culture and religion and conform to western culture in order to improve their status. Certainly, Muslim women should oppose and resist, as western women have been trying to do, the misogyny and androcentrism of whatever culture they find themselves in. This is not the same as saying that they have to adopt Western culture and reject Islam entirely.

I believe that the existing stereotypes

about women in Islam, which are perpetuated by the western media, and these negative attitudes towards Muslims and Islam will persist unless educators take a more rigorous look at their biases.

It is important when dealing with aspects of other cultures to be aware of two critical issues. First, one must acknowledge, or be aware of, one's Eurocentrism. We can criticize sexism in other cultures without necessarily thinking that the adaptation of Western cultural practices would be the best solution. Second,

As a Muslim woman living in Canada, I have learned to be careful in terms of critiquing aspects of my own culture.

we must be aware that the criticism is happening in a racist milieu. This has certainly been an issue in the black feminist movement in which talking about sexism was often difficult because of the entrenched racism present in society. This does not mean that one should not be critical of specific forms of sexism in various cultures. It simply means that the critic himself/herself should be aware of his/her Eurocentrism and the racist context that permeates his/her society.

As a Muslim woman living in Canada, I have learned to be careful in terms of critiquing aspects of my own culture because of the way it might be interpreted. For example, although I am critical of the Iranian political system in regards to the treatment of women, I make sure that Westerners learn that at present there are more female students studying in Iranian universities than ever before.

Some Suggestions for Working with Muslim Students

The suggestions offered below can be helpful to those working across differences in a variety of school-related situations.

- 1) Islam, contrary to popular belief, is not a monolithic religion but is open to various interpretations. In the Islamic world, there has been and continues to be a multiplicity of Islamic politics, from a more fundamentalist one to others which propose modern reform, each claiming that their version of Islam constitutes the true Islam (Najmabadi, 1991, p. 64).

Although the word "fundamentalism" is often used to refer to Muslims in the Western world, every religion has its own fundamentalism. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism is very much related to the colonial experience and the crisis of identity. It should be seen as a political movement, rather than as a religious revival, as a conscious political rejection of the West and the political models associated with it.

- 2) We need to listen more carefully to the voices of Muslim students when dealing with the issues they face in the education system. I find that an open dialogue with Muslim students, which encourages them to organize and come up with ideas and to develop new skills in dealing with educational institutions, is a very useful strategy.

- 3) With the rise of the Muslim student population, educators should acquaint themselves with the diversity of their religious and cultural views. Nowadays, one finds an increasing number of Western publications dealing with Islamic societies, especially regarding the relation between women and Islam. There has been much controversy and debate in the area, which educators need to be aware of.

- 4) The definition of anti-racist education should be more inclusive; anti-racism should include issues of ethnicity and religion. This is not to suggest that we should go back to the multiculturalism approach, but we should understand that the process of exclusion does not always occur because of colour differences. A good beginning would be to adopt the definition of racism given by Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1992, p. 15). They state that racism should be defined as a "set of postulates, images, and practices which serve to differentiate and dominate. These can use all kinds of

signifiers and markers. They serve to deny full participation in economic, social, political and cultural life by the essence that they posit. The supposed essence of difference is given a negative evaluation."

A study of Canadian history, and of world history, indicates many instances in which groups of people are excluded and even exterminated because of cultural and religious differences. A critical look at contemporary world events shows that despite the presence of underlying economic interests in the many conflicts and wars, the majority of them have a religious connotation.

- 5) The development of guidelines for dealing with issues pertinent to Muslim culture and religion (for example, provision of space for prayers, or consideration of particular curricula) is a good idea, but educators must be wary of the tendency of such policies to generate new problems and stereotypes by being overly general and simplistic. There also may be a danger of adhering to a rigidly problem-oriented approach. Educators would do well to use the development of guidelines as an opportunity to invite student and community involvement.
- 6) Muslims, like any other group of people, do not have a single, fixed identity. As Edward Said has said in his most recent work (1993, p. 336):

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or women, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were mainly, exclusively, White, or Black, or Western, or Oriental.

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Anti-bias Curriculum in Early Childhood Education

At the Nexus Between Home and School

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Anti-bias curriculum is aimed at providing an inclusive education. It is based on Paulo Freire's notion of the "practice of freedom" which is "the means by which we deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of our world" (Freire, 1970, p. 15). It addresses more than cultural diversity by including gender, class differences, and differences in physical abilities. It is based on children's developmental tasks as they construct identity and attitudes and it directly addresses the impact of stereotyping, bias, and discriminatory behaviour in young children's development and interactions.

Because anti-bias curriculum embraces an educational philosophy, it is value based. It sets up a creative tension between respecting differences and not accepting unfair beliefs and acts. It asks teachers and children to confront troublesome issues rather than covering them up. An anti-bias perspective is not just an add-on; it is integral to all aspects of daily classroom life.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force headed by Louise Derman-Sparks in the U.S. (1989) has produced a comprehensive set of guidelines which should be of interest to early childhood professionals in Ontario. The guidelines suggest ways to help young children address bias and stereotypes in the classroom before they transform into real racism or are internalized in the form of negative self-images and attitudes. They seek to assist teachers in empowering children to develop positive self-images, think critically about diversity, and stand up for them-

selves and others in the face of injustice. They include suggestions for helping children resist stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour, and learn both assertion and empathy. They also include suggestions for teacher self-education and for involving parents in addressing issues of bias.

Located at the very nexus between home and school, early childhood programs play a critical role in the child's learning and socialization process. Children are aware very early in their lives that colour, language, gender, and physical ability differences are connected with privilege and power. They learn by observing the differences and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken messages about those differences. According to developmental psychologists, children between the ages of birth to four years are in the midst of forming the core of their identity. The development of this identity occurs in large part by incorporating the view held by the adults who care for them. If the views of those adults are negative and inconsistent with the values of the family and community, the impact on a child's sense of identity can be devastating. This is why it is crucial for Ontario daycares to practise the approach of anti-bias curriculum.

The Role of the Teacher

In the daycare centre, it is imperative for the teacher to incorporate each home — with its cultural characteristics and expectations — into the program as much as possible. Whether or not teachers view the child's family in collaborative or competitive terms, the family is central to the child's development and often critical to the child's success in school. As children enter the daycare, their families also come with them. Fail-

ure to value the child's family is tantamount to devaluing the child. Teachers need to clarify for themselves the nature of the connections between culture, family, children, and curriculum.

An environment that is rich in possibilities for exploring gender, race/ethnicity, and different-abledness sets the scene for practising anti-bias curriculum. The material and people resources in the classroom provide children with important data. Things in the environment also alert children to what the teacher considers important or unimportant. Children are as vulnerable to omissions as they are to inaccuracies and stereotypes: what isn't seen can be as powerful a contributor to attitudes as what is seen. Creating a

Failure to value the child's family is tantamount to devaluing the child.

diverse environment is the first step in implementing an inclusive, anti-bias curriculum. Teachers need to examine the presuppositions behind their choice of classroom materials to discover the hidden messages they may be giving children. Exclusion of a range of dark colours in art may give an unintended message, as might illustrations and decorations depicting only one racial group, predominance of one gender, exclusion of older people, or absence of recognizable handicaps. Most early childhood materials presume a common body of preschool cultural experiences, including nursery rhymes, stories, foods, popular animals, knowledge of seasons, Canadian holiday celebrations, and even similar patterns of interactions with adults. Most of the planned activities in a preschool setting are conducted orally, requiring listening and discussion skills, and free choice and independent work habits. Rarely does a teacher stop to reflect on how culturally biased these expectations are for the classroom behaviour and abilities of even a very young child (Mock, 1982).

Educators and literary authorities are

increasingly recognizing the role of children's literature in shaping attitudes and in stimulating children's language and cognitive development. Carole Ann Reed, for example, suggests that there is "a long, cross-cultural respect for the power of the story as an educational tool ... as a way of teaching what is important to that culture" (1992, p. 13). All children's books reflect social values and attitudes, so carefully selected books that reflect the many traditions and values represented in the community and wider society can be a major resource in the daycare centre.

If teachers are to work towards encouraging the development of each child to his or her fullest potential, then the beginning point needs to be self-education.

Teachers and parents have a common need for joining together in partnerships to foster positive growth in both the children and themselves. Teachers need to acknowledge that they can learn from parents as well as parents learning from them. This can be done by involving families in the centre; by engaging in joint learning activities, supporting each other in their respective roles, conducting collaborative curriculum projects in the centre, participating in various decision making processes, and being advocates for all children.

Curriculum developers who have focussed on multicultural perspectives — Chud and Fahlman (1985) and Derman-Sparks (1989) — have advocated the thoughtful study of self as a prerequisite for any attempt to introduce anti-bias approaches into work with young children and their families. Inclusion is more than simple representation of dimensions of diversity. As teachers' understanding of their own culturally influenced inner structures deepens, they may become increasingly able to recognize parallel

structures in the children they teach and in the families of which those children are a part. They can then mediate effectively in the children's emerging formulation of concepts of self and others, for the greater the understanding and awareness one has of one's own cultural behaviour, the more likely one is to be open to differing behaviour in others.

An Exemplary Program

The Child Development Center at Cabrillo Community College in California is a model of how anti-bias curriculum can work within a racially diverse setting (Chang, 1993). Children at Cabrillo, ranging from two to five years of age, enroll in either full-day or half-day programs. Classrooms are covered with the children's own artwork, as well as visual images aimed at breaking down social stereotypes, such as posters of children of colour, differently abled children, and girls and boys in non-stereotypical roles. Play areas are designated in both English and Spanish, and whenever possible, ethnically diverse "tools" are incorporated in different play areas. For example, the play kitchen features cooking and eating utensils such as a bamboo steamer, lacquerware bowls, and chopsticks, which are utilized in the homes of the children in the Center. The teachers embrace the anti-bias philosophy and work together as a team, recognizing that prejudices and stereotypes are tangible and serious problems and that staff need to be always looking out for these issues and thinking of ways to address them.

Another assumption in the Cabrillo anti-bias approach is that parents are children's first, best, and lifetime teachers, and that any attempt to change the lives of children must include a mutual education process between the parents and the Center staff. The program seeks not only to acknowledge and respect differences in others but also to embed the child/family culture into the daily life of the Center.

In Conclusion

Creating an environment in which staff are able to incorporate an anti-bias approach requires continual effort, planning, and staff development activities. Engaging staff in an ongoing open dia-

logue about cultural differences can be extremely challenging. But unless staff are able to discuss these issues, it is impossible to identify sources of disagreement or explicitly define areas of common ground. Engaging in these types of discussions requires the building of a supportive, safe climate where individuals have enough trust in each other to believe that their concerns will be heard and not discounted or labelled as racist or sexist. Building staff cohesion requires allowing staff to discover, understand, and appreciate different perspectives and approaches, and it requires a basic understanding that people do not always interpret events in the same way.

If teachers are to work towards encouraging the development of each child to his or her fullest potential, then the beginning point needs to be self-education. We need to increase critical awareness of our own attitudes about gender, race, ethnicity, and physical abilities and to learn to identify ways that these attitudes are institutionalized and affect the program. We need to understand how young children develop identity and attitudes and increase our understanding of cultural variables. As educators of young children, we need to adopt an inclusive philosophy and plan ways to introduce anti-bias practices into the program.

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Special
Report on
Ethno-Linguistic
Minority
Children

Between 1985 and 1988, we worked in close contact with children, teachers, and parents on a project, entitled "Language and Learning: Effecting Change through Collaborative Research in Multilingual Schools."

Three Ethnic Communities of "Difference"

Chinese, Portuguese, and Greek

Alice Huynh, Ilda Januario, Mei Lian Yang Lam, and Myriam Shechter

Throughout our three years as ethno-graphic researchers in multi-ethnic schools and later on as educational researchers and teachers, we became witnesses to the balancing act of children from various ethnic communities between affirming their membership in their parents' communities and making room for themselves in the community of their own native or adopted country. We also witnessed their teachers' efforts to solve sometimes insoluble problems, their helplessness in trying to match their own expectations and the children's families' expectations. We never observed overt racism or anything resembling racism; rather, we saw unfortunate mismatches of ideologies and, on occasion, lack of empathy for issues specific to certain ethnic groups.

Between 1985 and 1988, we worked in close contact with children, teachers, and parents on a project, entitled "Language and Learning: Effecting Change through Collaborative Research in Multilingual Schools." Funded by grants from the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, and the Toronto Board of Education, this project followed the educational progress of 72 children from three cultural and ethno-linguistic groups, Chinese, Portuguese, and Greek, as well as a control group of native speakers of English. We observed these children in their classrooms, Kindergarten to Grade 6, in two east-central and two west-central schools within the jurisdiction of the Toronto Board of Education.

For three years, we observed the children, shared their teachers' concerns, and were accepted into the home lives of the children and their families. We each wrote comprehensive case studies of children we were observing, with the focus

both on the successes achieved by the school and the community, as well as on areas of potential misunderstanding between teachers, parents, and children, which occasionally resulted in detrimental consequences for some of the children.¹

The following articles summarize some of these case studies but, at the same time, they reflect our current concerns and thoughts as we pursue our work as educators and researchers. Although writing about three different communities, we found common concerns and issues, such as communication between home and school, communication among teachers from grade to grade, as well as among teachers of various subjects. We also found a lack of contact between the school and heritage language classes compounded by the use of very different educational systems. In all the case studies, we were struck by the serious consequences for ethnic families of struggling with the special language of report cards, of being reluctant to have their children tested, and of being cautious towards the school's bureaucratic response to the needs of at-risk students. We also became aware of the teachers' lack of familiarity with some of the cultures in their schools and of dangerous preconceptions about students' abilities based on ethnic stereotyping. However, we also saw genuine attempts — from the teachers and from the parents — to deal with the tensions generated by the multiple ethnicity of our schools — attempts ranging all the way from struggling to identify problems, to sympathizing with one another, and finally to looking for solutions.

NOTE

1. These case studies are included in Volume II of the final report of the project, "Language and Learning: Learners, Teachers, and Researchers at Work," to be published by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training.

Accept, Adjust, Adapt

The Gap in Cultural Perspectives for Chinese Children and Families

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There are many variables that could help explain why some language minority children are underachievers. The reasons could be cognitive, cultural, or linguistic. Chinese children, for example, are commonly observed at school as well-disciplined, independent, and co-operative; however, they could also be perceived to be reticent, to have a passive learning attitude, and to lack an inquisitive mind.

Although a linguistic mismatch impedes children's literacy learning and may lead to academic failure, we believe that, besides the linguistic mismatch, there is also a cultural mismatch that may have a far-reaching impact as well. The cultural mismatch is neglected because of its hidden nature. The behaviour of many non-mainstream children is often misinterpreted because of the difference in cultural perspectives.

Confucianism, as a philosophy, has been an essential part of Chinese politics and ethics. Chinese people have followed the teachings of Confucius for more than two thousand years. The Confucian ideology penetrates deeply into the collective mind of the Chinese from the time of their earliest upbringing and leads them to act dutifully to the family and society. Listening and observing are strongly emphasized by Confucius, who says, "There may be those who act without knowing why. I do not do so. Listen as much as you can and select what is good to follow; observe as much as you can

and remember it." This ethic has been passed on from generation to generation.

We may argue that using a cultural-mismatch perspective to explain children's low academic achievement is overly simplistic (Steinberg, 1981; Sue & Padilla, 1986), but in practice little attention has been given by educators to the importance of recognizing and identifying aspects of this mismatch. Therefore, it is crucial to make school personnel aware of it so that a way may be found to minimize the friction between the different cultures in order to improve children's learning conditions.

From our point of view, some of the Chinese traditional beliefs and values do not fit in current education practice. For example, the emphasis on using oral language to interact in the classroom for the construction of knowledge prevails in

Educators need to have a deeper understanding of the nature of classroom social interactions of children from different linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

schools, in particular for primary children. Show and Tell is an example. It is one of the curriculum periods that is designed for young children to learn how to take turns, to express their ideas in a group, to get the attention of others (Savignon, 1983). Yet, as indicated earlier, young Chinese children are encouraged

to learn by listening and observing — "listen as much as you can and select what is good to follow; observe as much as you can and remember it." Chinese children are also taught to be modest or humble. According to Chinese traditional culture, "talking about" and "showing off" one's own possessions is rude and unacceptable because it is considered egocentric. Thus, Chinese children have to modify their behaviour when they enter Canadian schools, learning to believe that it is proper to talk about oneself and to show off one's property in public to a large audience, as in Show and Tell situations.

Educators need to have a deeper understanding of the nature of classroom social interactions of children from different linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds. There are differences in the norms of what counts as social ability in children. As we will see in the case of Ben, teachers can interpret reticent behaviour as a social problem.

Ben

Ben is one of several children who were observed over a period of three years. He was considered a top student academically by all the teachers, but his social interaction was limited. His kindergarten teacher commented, "He was a fairly quiet, shy, sensitive child... He sat back and watched until he was sure what was required of him." Another teacher made a similar comment, "Ben has always been an excellent student, very introverted and shy." All the time Ben had been in school, the teachers seemed to worry about what they labelled as his "social skills."

Ben was from a family where both parents had received sufficient education to help him with his school work and teach him the school language — English. Compared to other language-minority children, Ben adjusted to the school community much more easily linguistically than those who came from a similar cultural background. His competency in math and language was acknowledged by the teachers and his peers. Nevertheless, his reticent attitude, from the teacher's perspective, inhibited his social interaction. A narrow interpretation of being sociable is to engage in oral interactions with a variety of people in different situations. Ben, despite his

competency in English, did not interact comfortably with adults or with a large group of children.

Jee Sing

Jee Sing Yau, a ten-year-old boy, was brought up in an environment where two Chinese dialects were frequently spoken. He started learning English when he entered school, and the teacher often commented that he had positive learning attitudes. Through the message conveyed at parent-teacher interviews, his parents assumed that their child was doing well at school.

Yet was Jee Sing doing as well as his parents believed? After being in school for seven years, Jee Sing had become proficient in his oral language; he was also very confident in writing. His stories were noted by the teachers to be "interesting and well thought-out," despite problems with spelling and sentence structure. As a result, some teachers suggested that he stop using Chinese at home for fear of linguistic interference — a notion not in keeping with language development theories, as most research indicates that the maintenance of a first language facilitates second language learning (Cummins, 1984, pp. 80–95).

Meanwhile, other teachers suggested that Jee Sing read as much as he could at home. Therefore, Jee Sing leafed through various picture books for about 20 minutes at home as a daily reading routine. Occasionally, at his parents' request, he would retell some of the stories in Chinese. However, by Grade 4, reading was still a difficult task, even when he was reading the Berenstain Bears books; he continued to read aloud and to use his finger to guide himself along.

In fact, reading had been a struggle for Jee Sing throughout the primary grades. His mid-term report cards all indicated that he was weak at decoding and lacked comprehension skills. Yet by the end of each grade, his reading problems seemed to have been resolved as indicated in the final report cards — he was "functioning at grade level."

Does the label "functioning at grade level" do justice to a student's reading ability? Many parents, like Jee Sing's, are unable to detect their children's reading difficulties with statements such as, "eager to read aloud," "enjoys reading

familiar books repeatedly," and "is learning to retell stories." When these statements appear in late primary grade reports, they actually indicate that the student has reading problems. While it is necessary for teachers to be positive in reporting to parents, it is equally important that parents be informed of the truth. Positive statements are essential to help develop self-esteem, yet they can be detrimental when misinterpreted.

From the discussion of Jee Sing's case, it is obvious that the root of his reading problem begins with a linguistic mismatch and is further complicated by the ambiguity of his progress reports.

That Jee Sing was functioning as a bilingual child and that Ben was reticent were realities that teachers cannot change. But as educators, we can change ourselves to help children like Jee Sing and Ben. To achieve this goal, we must reflect upon the following:

- 1) Do we offer a program that takes into account the needs and backgrounds of language-minority children?
- 2) How can we be better at teaching children from different cultures?
- 3) How effective is our communication with immigrant parents?
- 4) For whom are we writing report cards? Can parents read between the lines?

Owing to the language barrier, time constraints, and cultural alienation, most minority-language parents confine their involvement with the school to parent-teacher interviews at report-card time. Understanding the differences in the minority children's home background will definitely take much effort on the part of the educators.

Many teachers relate to language-minority parents by trying to re-educate them, advising them on how to interact with their children, inquiring about their school work, encouraging family outings, and trying to involve them in different types of activities at home. However, we feel this is not the most effective way to help the child. In this respect, we agree with Heath (1986) who asserts that teaching parents how to raise their children has relatively little chance of achieving success. She indicates that trying to impose external values on home

life "is not likely to bring any significant internal change to families" (Heath, 1986). The home's expectation of learning and education is often very different from the school's, especially for schools situated in multicultural and multilingual environments.

If we truly believe that we can make a difference, we must commit ourselves to the children. Strong commitment means making our students feel confident about themselves — acknowledging their efforts and allowing for individual differences. It also means providing maximum support to help language minority children — modifying our program so that all children can feel included and experience success.

It is certain that knowing the culture of others offers the possibility of expanding the abilities of all groups to "create and learn new information and to adjust and adapt to new circumstances" (Heath, 1986). Many teachers do not speak the particular ethnic-community languages, and it is not realistic to expect a teacher to speak all the languages of the children in the classroom. We believe that policy makers should recruit more people from different ethnic groups to work in schools. By means of direct contact with these minority staff, one can hope that teachers and schools could become better informed and the mismatch could be minimized. Schooling is meant to provide every child with learning opportunities; ultimately, it is the teacher's responsibility to discover what the child's competencies are and to help extend and develop them.

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A Happy Little Guy?

Case Study of a Portuguese-Canadian Child in the Primary Grades

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According to census data, the Portuguese-Canadian community is the fourth largest ethno-linguistic minority in Ontario, the third largest in Greater Toronto, and the largest in the City of Toronto. Students whose home language is Portuguese make up the third largest group in the Toronto Board of Education and in the Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board; in the latter board, they are the second largest group at the primary level.

In spite of this community's large numbers and its status as a settled community with a 40-year history in Canada, most community workers and activists worry about its poor history of academic achievement, high drop-outs rates, and low access to post-secondary education which is, in fact, lower than for most other ethnocultural communities with the exception of blacks and native peoples. For example, a 1987 study of the Toronto Board of Education showed that Portuguese and black students had the lowest representation of all ethnic or racial groups in the advanced stream at the secondary level. Five years later, this situation remained unchanged.

Recent contacts I have had with school community advisors and activist groups such as the University of Toronto Portuguese Association Outreach Programs (which has been formed by students), the Toronto Portuguese Parents Association in Liaison with the Toronto School Board, the Portuguese-Canadian National Congress, as well as meetings I attended organized by the Commission for Concerned Community Members, all attest to the fact that the situation has not improved and that the findings of the Language and Learning research project

still apply to many children of immigrant families. In my research work which serves as the basis for this article, I have seen how the intersection of ethnic origin and social class of Portuguese-Canadian students, the great majority of whom were born in Canada, affects their academic achievement, starting in the early grades.

Tomas

In my study of children in Senior Kindergarten and the lower grades, most of whom were boys, several issues arose. To illustrate these issues, I will introduce "Tomas." He exemplifies the type of student who, although born in Canada, learned Portuguese as his first language. The first born in a working-class household, Tomas had little opportunity to learn English and he started Kindergarten without having been exposed to story books; neither had he ever visited the neighbourhood library nor received any informal instruction in Portuguese. Once in school, he picked up enough English during the first year to become a regular student in SK. His mother, who speaks some English, did not want to initiate him into letters and numbers in Portuguese for fear of confusing him linguistically.

The Kindergarten teacher judged that Tomas showed little inclination to use paper and pencil by himself and that he did not seem to exhibit much small-muscle co-ordination or good abstract thinking skills. She said, "He's a very happy little guy. He's very polite.... Intellectually, the work I give, most of it he can't do. He loves to do it but it has to be done on a one-to-one...." Hence, he was excluded from the class's advanced group of five students who met regularly to work with numbers and letters. The teacher recommended that he pass to

Grade 1 but predicted he would have to repeat that grade.

His mother was disappointed with the SK program because she had expected more formal learning. She had strong doubts about the value of the informal home instruction the teacher suggested, such as having him help count the cutlery while she set the table. When Tomas went on to Grade 1, his mother, encouraged by the homeroom teachers to work with him in Portuguese, had him copy letters and numbers in a formal fashion and made him attend the after-school heritage language program. Although there was no communication between this instructor and the regular teacher, the former corroborated many of the observations made by the other teachers — that Tomas had poor work habits, had difficulty in understanding and following through with instructions, and that his parents were very demanding and tended to disregard the fact that he was a slow learner. His command of Portuguese was less than adequate and he was at a loss to explain concepts or retell complicated events.

Tomas made good progress in Grade 1 but not enough to make the grade. He had difficulty in remaining seated in a classroom groups because he was too easily distracted. He repeated the grade, as predicted. The following year, the last of my research project, Tomas was placed into a split Grade 1/2 class with a new and inexperienced teacher. His progress slowed down. Quite a physically and emotionally developed individual, Tomas was becoming increasingly restless and anxious and was no longer a "happy little guy." The teacher still found his speech garbled and asked that he be tested both for language and for psychological problems. His parents consented to the former test but refused the latter and were satisfied when Tomas was found to be within the norm for his age group as far as language ability was concerned.

On the whole, Tomas's parents were unhappy with his lack of progress and his recent discipline problems, which they contrasted with his younger sister's behaviour; they punished him more often as time went by, namely by withdrawing TV, play, or gift privileges. His mother felt misunderstood and short-changed in her dealings with the principal and teach-

ers. She also felt out of place in the PTA, run mostly by middle-class Canadian-born parents, and limited her participation in the school's hot dog sale. The tension between home and school increased after the teacher called on Children's Aid to report what seemed to be physical abuse, a charge denied by his mother.

There seem to be several major issues to account for the problems encountered by Tomas and his parents. First of all are issues related to the social class background of Tomas's family. Because of their limited educational resources, Tomas's parents lacked the confidence to help their child and to participate meaningfully in school. This situation was made worse by the inconsistent expectations the teachers had for Tomas, based in part on his background. Such expectations lead to a subtle, unequal treatment of these children and the institution of year-long ability groupings within the classroom which are reflected in such activities as numbers and letters and math and reading clubs. Often teachers do not appreciate the substantial progress children like Tomas make in school because it is not necessarily accompanied by obvious academic achievement; it may take five to seven years for these children to master English.

The second issue is the very limited support that children with little English receive in the system. Often these children are treated as if they had a linguistically "deficient" instead of an "enriched" background, and the school culture and the curriculum do not explore in a systematic and profound manner the multicultural nature of Canadian society. Moreover, little importance is attached to the learning of second and third languages and cultures as an essential component of literacy and of quality education. This explains why primary grade teachers in schools with high immigrant populations are not provided with extra help in the classroom, help that would provide more individualized teaching for these children. The commonly touted solution of extra ESL classes is not advisable because the children are not literate in their home language and it does not help their situation to be removed from the regular classroom.

Further, the attitude of many staff

towards children's home language and culture, viewing them as liabilities rather than assets, negatively affects the status and in-service of heritage (now "international") language teachers and contributes to the lack of communication between these and the homeroom teachers.

A third problem area is the lack of continuity not only between home and school experience for many of these chil-

Little importance is attached to the learning of second and third languages and cultures as an essential component of literacy and of quality education.

dren but also between learning environment from grade to grade, from teacher to teacher, and from school to school. Involved Portuguese-Canadian parents often complain about the lack of continuity in curriculum delivery within the system. Standards for the same grade vary from school to school and are often low in the schools within the traditional community, a fact which contributes to the streaming of Portuguese-Canadian students into the lower secondary levels. In my own experience, this lack of continuity is also evident between grades and teachers, especially in SK and Grades 1 to 3. Some teachers favour *process* (i.e., how they are taught) over *product* (i.e., what they are taught and what they learn) when instructing children like Tomas, but they would be better served by a type of instruction that balances both requirements.

Kindergarten programs, in particular, appear contradictory or misleading in their philosophy. While these programs are designed to be mostly educational play, children who have been initiated early and naturally to literacy and numeracy by parents have a decided

advantage. Such children are made to feel confident and are encouraged to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in kindergarten. Non-initiated preschoolers like Tomas may not be challenged beyond learning to write their first name. Unfortunately, many parents are unable to introduce their children to letters and numbers for a variety of reasons.

A final concern, which I share with many involved parents, is that schools are in general too cautious, consequently too slow to respond to "at risk" students like Tomas. When problems became apparent, the staff could offer no solution other than to make him undergo psychological testing. When the parents refused, no other options were available. The negative connotation of psychological testing is such that perhaps a different terminology should be found, and a clear message should be given to parents that special education is not the only alternative available.

To conclude, these problems are not unique to working-class children who enter the school system with little or no English. They are merely aggravated by the fact that they and their parents are not fluent speakers of English and that they understand even less the school system. In this age where greater "parental involvement" is the buzz phrase, boards and schools must ultimately assume the responsibility for imparting excellent education in those areas of the city where parents are not able or willing to share this responsibility because they do not have the time, energy, or knowledge to do so. This also means that boards and schools must become sensitive to the social and ethnocultural nature of their neighbourhoods and make the most of their resources where it counts — in the classroom.

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"It was a real shame that something wasn't done sooner"

A Greek-Canadian Child's Experience

Myriam Shechter

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"The teachers should be more aware of the country of origin of the children, not just test and make decisions based on that ... Because he is Greek [the teachers] assume that he is dumb." (from a parent interview)

"One of the problems is that many of our Greek parents felt that there is better education offered in Greece than here; and they didn't think there was enough memory work and enough rote teaching to satisfy their particular needs." (from a teacher interview)

Irreconcilable differences? Not quite so. More like the need to build some bridges and to try to cross them from both sides. Because right in the centre are the children, and they are the future, and they are certainly worth the effort both from the school's side and from the parents' side.

The teachers I have worked with and whose classrooms I have observed showed obvious concern for the academic and social progress of the children in their classrooms and quite often for their progress beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The parents I talked to genuinely tried to understand the school system and to support their children in their learning efforts. I witnessed success stories, such as Helen and Mano, children from homes where English was hardly spoken or understood. Both of them managed to succeed academically and were looking forward to achieving their goals in life, having benefited from the two cultures that shaped their growth and development. However, I also encountered some children such as Ari.

Ari

A nice-looking boy, with a dark complexion and large dark eyes, Ari was always smiling, interested, eager, ready

to be of help, a perfect little "gentleman." All his teachers commented favourably on his behaviour and classroom interaction. Considered intelligent, with caring and concerned parents, a helpful older brother, lots of friends, Ari slipped from a ranking of 13th out of 23 in Grade 2, to 14th out of 17 in Grade 3, and finally 28th out of 28 in Grade 4.

Although fairly fluent in English, Ari's parents spoke exclusively Greek at home. Ari and his brother, both Canadian-born, were fluently bilingual and participated with enthusiasm in a variety of Greek ethnic-oriented activities.

Firmly rooted in their community, Ari's family shared its beliefs and values. Parents from the Greek community want their children to integrate and succeed in Canadian society, but it is also of utmost importance to them that they preserve the Greek language and culture. Most children attend after-school Greek classes. Many Greek parents do not understand the Canadian educational system; they think that, because there is little or no homework, the system is inferior. If their children do not excel in school, the parents look upon it as a tragedy and usually blame the school for not forcing the children to learn. "A poor school record ... brings on parental displeasure, shame on the whole family, and ridicule on the child" (Antoniou, 1974).

In spite of his fairly good ranking in Grade 2, Ari already had reading problems when we started observing him. His Grade 3 teacher suggested that he be tested for possible learning disabilities; however, the family opposed it and did not agree with the tentative suggestion of his teacher that he repeat Grade 3. The family suspected that the child was discriminated against "because he was Greek," and that he had a language problem because he only spoke Greek at home. The teacher did not insist on Ari repeating Grade 3, and the matter was shelved. By Grade 4, the child was

already in trouble, and the gap between school and parents was deeper than ever. The Grade 4 teacher commented: "... he had a lot of problems.... I think he was very aware of his problems, and some of it was a coverup. But I think he is an intelligent boy.... He had a really severe learning problem. It was a real shame that something wasn't done sooner with that particular child."

As the heritage language teacher did not grant us an interview, there were no data on Ari's performance or on his possible learning problems in Greek. With reciprocal trust severely compromised, the parents moved Ari out of school. There was no further communication between the parents and the school, nor between the teachers from the two schools.

Analysing the situation after the fact, one can perceive a regrettable lack of communication between school and family. On the one hand, the parents refused to have Ari tested; on the other hand, the teachers might have alienated the parents by suggesting retention. The parents might not have been fully aware that testing and support in Ari's area of weakness were viable possibilities. Had a disability or learning lag been identified, it might have been corrected or improved through personal attention from a qualified professional; hence the issue of retention would not even have come up. Ari's ability in subjects other than language had been proven (he was excellent in math and art), and his teachers considered him an intelligent child. The mother claims that she tried to talk to the principal and made lots of appointments; she could never get him, he never answered her calls. The same thing happened with the social worker. He had encouraged her to call him any time; however, according to her, he never returned her calls. It is not clear whether she ever tried to contact the teacher; probably not, because the teacher was genuinely surprised when she found out that the child had been moved to another school. In the final analysis, both the family and the school concurred in making Ari what he had become: a "lovely" boy with severe academic problems.

Let's look briefly at some of the issues that contributed to Ari's difficulties in the school system. During our three-year observation period, Ari had a

new teacher each year. Although some information had passed from one classroom to another, it was completely informal and voluntary on the part of the teachers. Some of the teachers read the information provided by the former classroom teacher, while others preferred to form their own impressions of the child, without input from anyone else.

Ari also spent many hours in his heritage language classes. While acknowledging the role of Greek school, one of the teachers voiced her concerns: "Between us and the Greek classes there is absolutely no communication. We are teaching one kind of methodology during the day; at night, it's an entirely different kind of methodology." Some form of cooperation or information-sharing between the day school and the Greek school might have shed light on potential problems. For a child with special learning problems, being exposed on a daily basis to two opposite approaches to learning could generate additional stress, especially if communication between teachers is virtually non-existent.

It may take a few weeks, or months, for a teacher to recognize special problems in a child and to start the bureaucratic machinery which will provide the specialized help needed by that particular child. In order to participate in any of these special classes, the child has to be tested. In order to be tested, the school has to secure the parents' approval. Greek parents are suspicious of special tests; they also believe that being tested and eventually put in a special class is a rather shameful event for the child and for the family.

Ari's parents did not trust the school because they did not understand how it worked and what it could do for their child. The Grade 3 teacher did not succeed in convincing them to have the child tested. Considering the child's academic record, there was always the possibility that some specific problem could have been identified, and the alternative — repeating the grade — would have never been proposed.

Who held the responsibility to decide what's best for the child? During the three years of our observing him, Ari had three classroom teachers as well as a French teacher, a music teacher, and a swimming teacher; he participated in library activities and was about to be enrolled in a reading clinic; he went to a private heritage lan-

guage school; at home, his brother helped him actively with English homework, and his parents supervised his Greek school homework. It is my belief that there was very little, if any, communication between teachers from grade to grade, and no communication whatsoever between regular school and heritage language school. The communication between school and home was not efficient; the report cards did not always reflect the exact nature of the problems encountered by Ari; and the parents and the school did not succeed in co-ordinating their respective beliefs and apprehensions.

It is very possible that Ari's "language arts" problems were triggered by a well-hidden poor command of the English language, rather than by a learning disability. One of the teachers shared with me his observations on the way Greek children use English; he believes that their English is adequate only on the surface, but that they miss deeper meanings or shades of the lexicon. For most of the words, they will be familiar only with one meaning and miss other possible meanings; they appear to be fully competent, because they are able to extract meaning from context. Their basic vocabulary, examined in isolation and out of context, would probably score lower than that of English "home" speakers.

The teacher voiced his apprehension that these children are actually deprived linguistically because of lack of exposure to the language, compared to children from homes where English is spoken, and that this linguistic lag is not detected and addressed, because the children manage to cover it using various communicative strategies. In higher grades, however, when a thorough knowledge of the language becomes imperative, they might find themselves in a position of inferiority, and then it may be too late to remedy the situation.

The teaching field would greatly benefit from an in-depth study of the linguistic competence of children from different ethnic backgrounds with the explicit purpose of establishing which areas of linguistic development — phonologic, syntactic, and/or semantic — need attention. The study should also look at what specific patterns could be identified for various ethnic groups. Educators would then be able to effectively help these children gain a better command of the

language and become competent literate members of society.

Identifying linguistic issues according to ethnic group will necessarily bring into focus the nature of the first language these children come to school with, with its own special characteristics and traits. Associations between the children's first language and the way English is learned should be taken into consideration and monitored throughout the child's progress through the school system. A professional development day devoted to familiarizing the teachers with specific features of the children's home languages would be beneficial for discovering special areas of difficulty in English caused by the transfer between languages.

Is there a solution? A learning environment that would take into account the linguistic background as well as the educational and cultural input of these children, a system that would allow teachers the time to develop specific pedagogical skills according to the present population of the school and to obtain the necessary time to work out learning strategies and long-term planning with the parents of the children entrusted to them. In a country where immigration is constant and children from around the world enter the educational system on a daily basis, small inroads can and should be made, in order to give a better chance to all children — regardless of their ethnic and linguistic background — to attain full potential according to their personal abilities and interests.

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Alice, Ilda, Mei Lian, and Myriam met while working as field researchers in the Language and Learning Project at OISE. Mutual professional interests and personal affinities helped forge a friendship that held forth over the years. These articles were written collaboratively and benefitted enormously from their respective current viewpoints as Myriam and Ilda pursue their careers as educational researchers at OISE, while Mei Lian and Alice are already experienced primary grade teachers.

Anti-Racist Educational Initiatives in Nova Scotia

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In January 1989, local and national media exposed two days of fist fights between blacks and whites at the Cole Harbour District High School, in the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board (see Ware & Brown, 1989). This incident and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's subsequent charging of predominantly black students galvanized the African-Nova Scotian community to intensify their pressure on both the school board and the province for anti-racist education. The black community in the Cole Harbour area formed a Parent-Student Association to pressure the province to drop the criminal charges and to institute a commission of public inquiry to investigate the causes of the conflict and of systemic racism in the educational system. Blacks claimed that the conflict was indicative of larger problems in Nova Scotia society — racism, superficial integration at the school, and blacks' frustration and anger over their limited future. The Parent-Student Association emphasized the need to examine the practice of streaming, the Eurocentric curriculum, racial minority students' disengagement from school, and the severe under-representation of racial minorities in teaching and administrative positions in the educational system.

This article examines the anti-racist educational initiatives of two Halifax-area school boards and the Nova Scotia Department of Education in the wake of the Cole Harbour incident.

Background: Inequality and Resistance

Blacks have always occupied a subordinate position in Nova Scotian society. Historically, they migrated to Nova Scotia as slaves, refugees, and cheap labour to work in the Sydney steel plant, the coal mines, and as domestics. They provided a reserve army of labour and were employed in segregated and split-labour markets where they were paid less than white workers for doing the same work.

The educational system perpetuated and reproduced this inequality through segregated schools, a Eurocentric curriculum, negative stereotypes, and low expectations for blacks. This resulted in low self-concept of ability, negative racial identity, and low achievement

among the black population. Thus, there was a low retention rate in high school, over-representation in general level and vocational courses, and severe under-representation in higher education (Thomas-Bernard *et al.*, 1975).

Though racially segregated schools were legally abolished in Nova Scotia in 1954, de facto segregated schools continued to exist in isolated communities and black schools remained unequal. The support systems necessary for blacks' success in school — such as appropriate counselling, positive role models, and inclusive curricula — were almost nonexistent. Teachers and students also lacked anti-racism training. As a result, though there were some benefits to integration, such as a few university graduates, the majority of black students did not graduate from high school. For example, in 1979, Moreau found that less than 1 percent of African-Nova Scotian students graduated from high school.

However, blacks have been resisting this inequality in education for over 100 years, and particularly since the 1970s. In 1975, the Preston communities in Halifax County filed a successful class-action suit with the Human Rights Commission against the Halifax County Municipal School Board, alleging unequal educational opportunities (i.e., facilities and programs) at black schools compared to non-black schools in the district. The class-action agreement called for such measures as increased funding for resource materials, specialist resource teachers, cross-cultural materials, and racially visible role models in the schools. A committee was established to monitor the implementation of these measures. The suit marked a turning point in the struggle for anti-racist education in Nova Scotia, and the committee was a forerunner of organizations to come.

Halifax County-Bedford District Board

Following the conflict at Cole Harbour High School, the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board realized the immediacy and need to address racism. Thus, in 1990, it included in its mission statement and philosophy a commitment to equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, colour, gen-

der, religion, creed, and abilities. The Board also employed a supervisor of Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights to develop a proactive policy. The policy addresses six major areas of concern: racial and ethnic harassment, student assessment and placement, curriculum, professional development, personnel policies and practices, and school and community relations (Halifax County-Bedford District School Board, 1991).

Though the majority of Board members voted against motions which called for "the provision of anti-racist education at all levels" and "appropriate multiracial policies and programs," on the grounds that the terms were too strong, others felt that the Board policies and programs statement did not go far enough. It is not surprising that the Board decided to use multicultural terms such as "racial and cultural diversity" rather than anti-racist terms, given that its funding came from the federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. The Department expected the Board's policy would be a model for other school boards.

It is too early to assess the impact of the Board's policy. However, I do not expect reform policies that have an emphasis on "cross-cultural understanding" and "changing attitudes" to effect fundamental institutional and system-wide changes. Given that Racism = Prejudice x Power, effective anti-racism policies involve more than changing attitudes and intercultural understanding. They include power sharing and proactive measures (Millar, 1993).

The Halifax District Board

Unlike the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board, the Halifax District School Board has acknowledged the school's role in racial oppression. It has adopted anti-racist initiatives and employed an anti-racist project officer to develop a new policy for anti-racism which is expected in October 1994. The current policy deals with five areas — curriculum, placement, employment equity, anti-racist training for all board employees, and the reduction of racially motivated incidents (Halifax District School Board, 1992).

Though the Board seems to waiver on the policy because of fear of institutional

change, the Board's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, which sees itself as the vanguard for implementing the policy, is taking some anti-racism initiatives. It is developing a mediation course with an anti-racism base for students who find it difficult to address racism. The committee is co-ordinating curricular materials which represent the lived experiences and contributions of racial minorities. These materials will be put in grade packages from pre-primary to Grade 12 and made accessible to all schools. In addition, the Board's photography contests feature posters with themes on Standing Against Racism that indicate to students that they can all do little things to combat racism. Unfortunately, the Board's funding for anti-racism programming is limited given its dependence on the province's funding formula for education.

Provincial Policies and Initiatives

Following the Cole Harbour conflict and other, similar, incidents, the Nova Scotian state was pressured to design and implement an anti-racist education policy. The Advisory Group on Race Relations, comprising representatives from the three levels of government and the black community, was appointed in 1991.

Of the Advisory Group's 94 recommendations, 19 dealt with anti-racist education and employment equity. For example, the Advisory Group recommended that the Department of Education incorporate anti-racist principles as a key element of the philosophy of education which would be reflected in all curricula, resource materials, and guidelines. Further, it suggested that the Department create a position for a senior Director of Race Relations. This Director would design and implement a comprehensive anti-racist education policy and strategy for the Department and for the school boards in order to create an institutional-change model that would help eliminate systemic racism in all aspects of the educational system. In addition, the Group recommended that the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union should review and amend, where necessary, its internal structure and philosophy to include a strong commitment to employment equity for black teachers within the Union

(Advisory Group on Race Relations, 1991).

The province accepted and/or endorsed the principle of the Advisory Group's recommendations and implemented some of them (Nova Scotia Government, 1992). It appointed an African-Nova Scotian as Education Consultant for Anti-Racism Policy Development and Black Education. She has advised the 22 school boards on how to develop an anti-racist education policy and has trained them in anti-racist education. The provincial officials' acceptance of the Advisory Group's recommendations indicates that they respond to extreme pressure.

However, it is not surprising that several school boards are developing ethno-cultural and race relations policies rather than anti-racist education policies, given the province's conservatism and resistance to change. Some educators argue that terms such as "racism" and "anti-racism" are confrontational while some even contend that racism is a non-issue.

Given the history of constraining blacks' struggle for equity in the province (see Calliste, 1994), the community has to be vigilant in monitoring the implementation of these new recommendations and in counteracting resistance to institutional transformation.

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